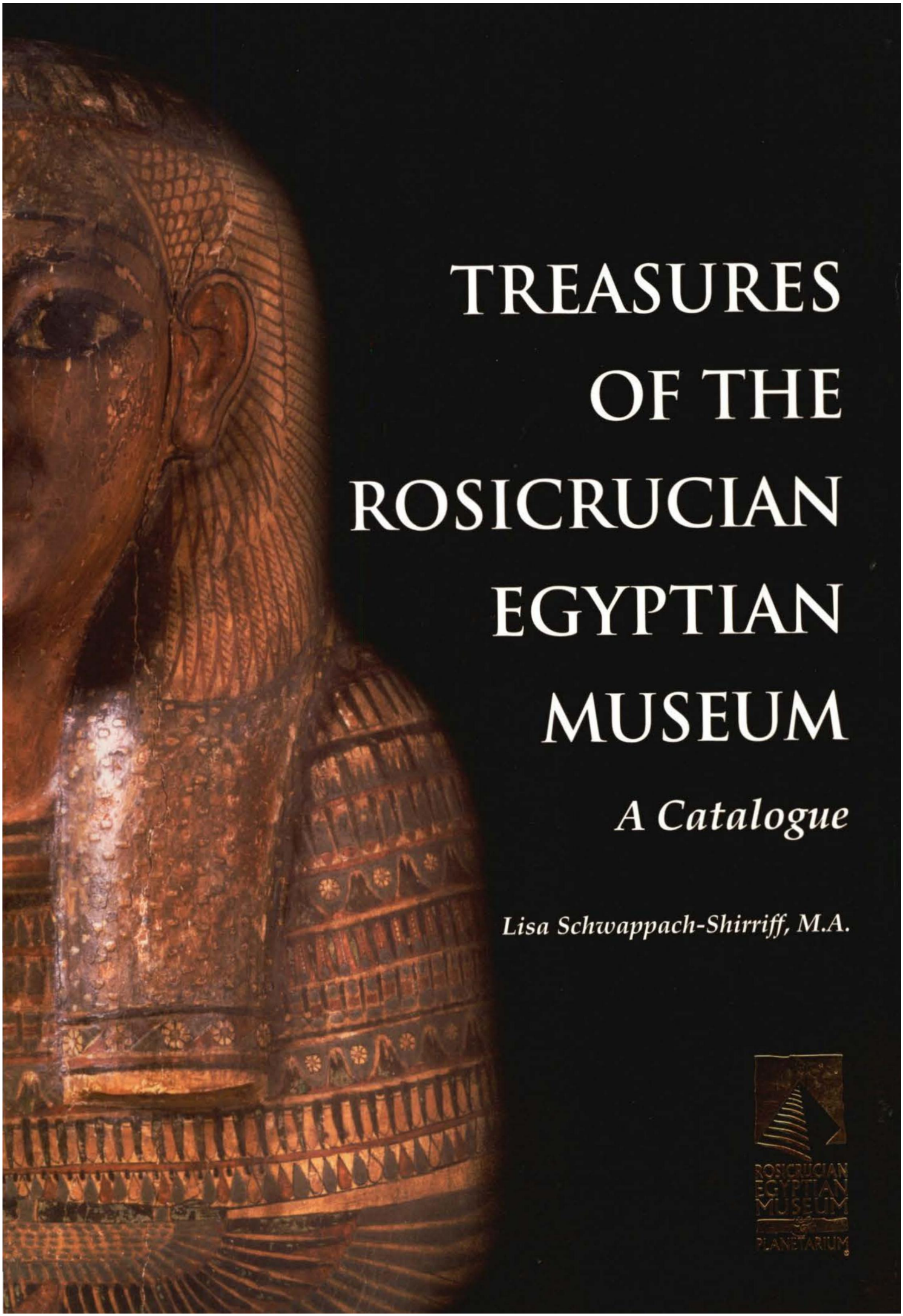
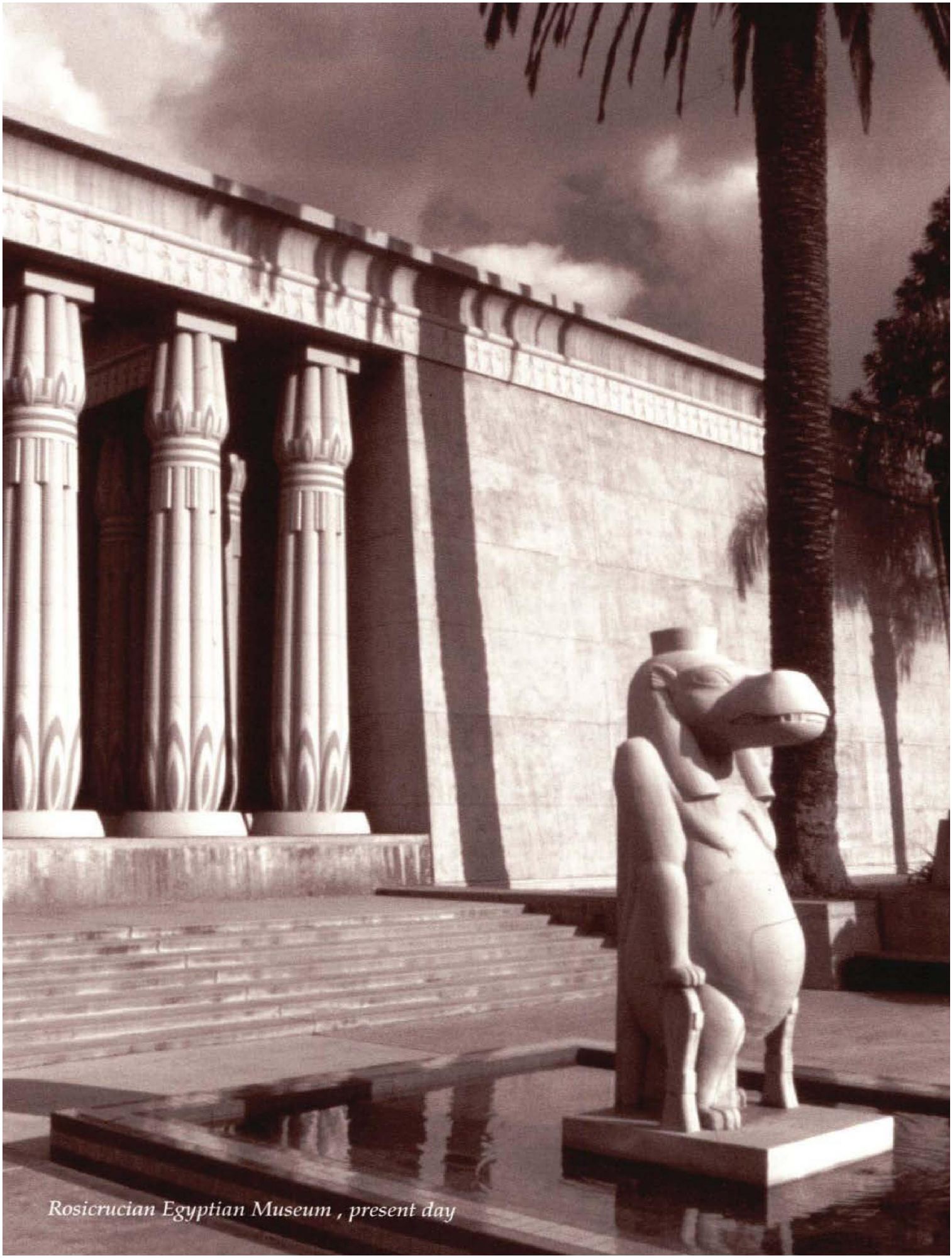


TREASURES OF THE ROSICRUCIAN EGYPTIAN MUSEUM

A Catalogue

Lisa Schwappach-Shirriff, M.A.

ROSICRUCIAN EGYPTIAN MUSEUM & PLANETARIUM



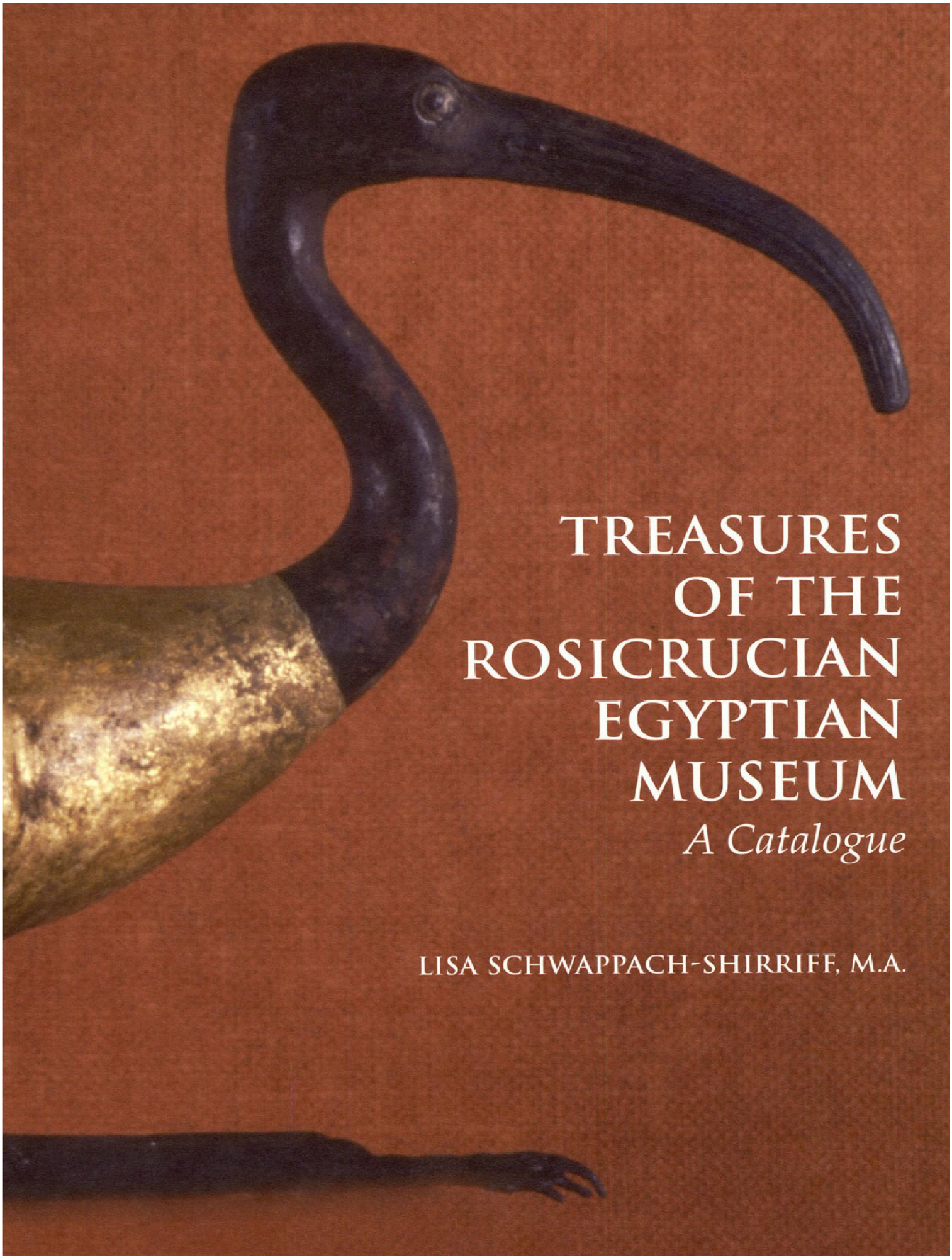
Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum , present day



TREASURES OF THE ROSICRUCIAN EGYPTIAN MUSEUM

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA





TREASURES OF THE ROSICRUCIAN EGYPTIAN MUSEUM

A Catalogue

LISA SCHWAPPACH-SHIRRIFF, M.A.



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Front and Back Cover: RC 2071 Coffin of Ta'awa-Sherit, page 27

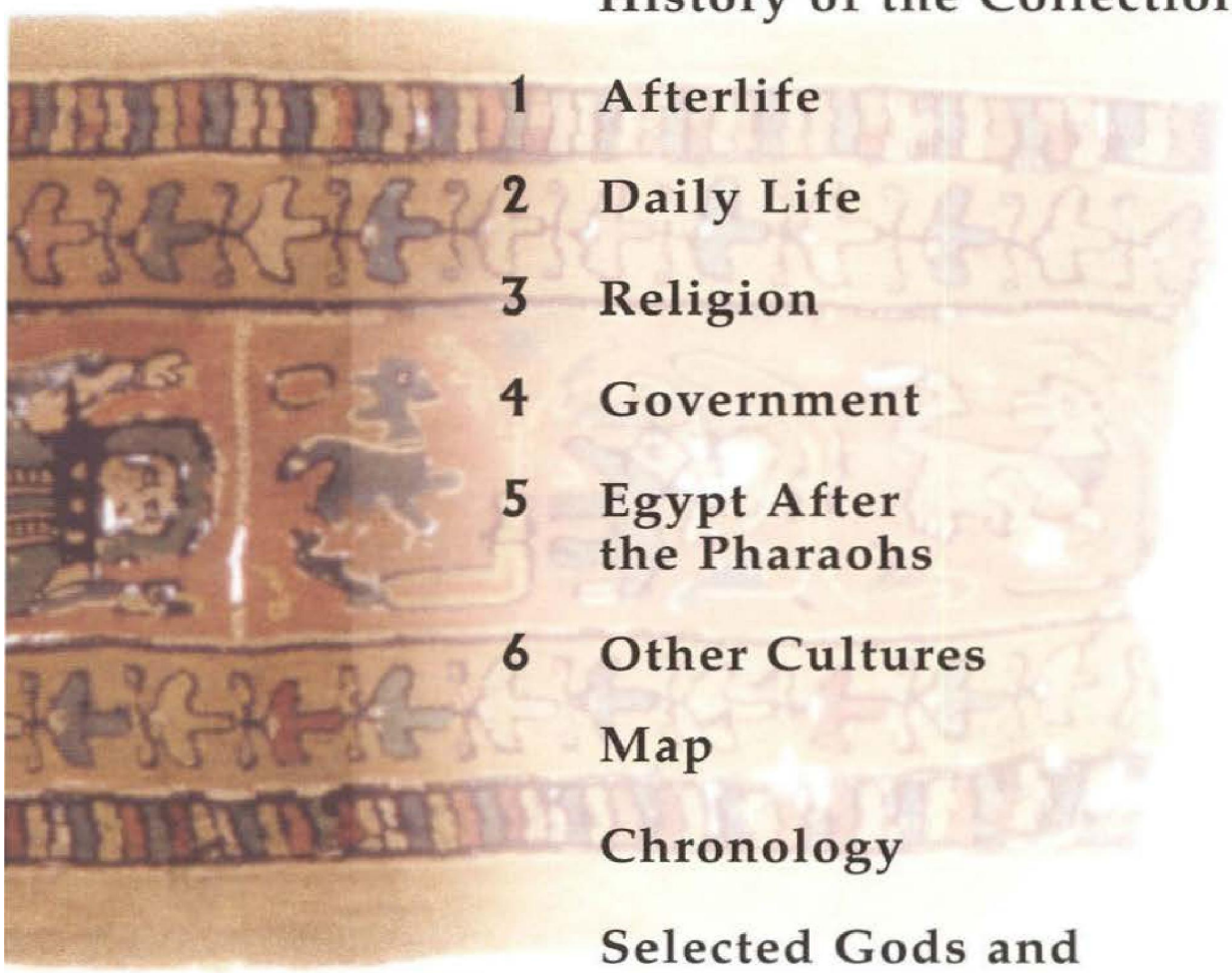
Frontispiece: RC 1804 Thoth Votive Mummy, page 69; Inset: RC 102 Funerary Mask, page 28

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HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

The history of the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum began with a dream. Dr. H. Spencer Lewis, the leader of the museum's sponsoring organization, the Rosicrucian Order, AMORC, cherished this dream and through his efforts the museum came into being. Located in Rosicrucian Park in San Jose, the museum is unique in the world.

In the early years of the last century, Dr. Lewis was presented with a small bronze votive image of the Egyptian goddess Sekhmet, a goddess of warfare, the hot desert wind, and healing. This lovely little image was placed upon the desk in his office, challenging each guest that entered. When asked what the figure was, Dr. Lewis responded, "That is the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum!" With these words, he dared his visitors to meet the challenge of creating this museum.

Inspired by his faith and vision, the members of the Order and the community responded in kind. Artifacts that had been family heirlooms were donated to the growing collection. Funds were donated in the hopes of creating a teaching collection unlike any in the San Francisco Bay Area. Other museums around the world were contacted and asked to contribute to this worthwhile cause.

In 1922, the opportunity arrived to support excavation work at the site of Tell el-Amarna in Egypt. Again, the people of the community rallied to the cause. Some artifacts that were excavated at the site were given to the museum in gratitude for the support that had been offered to the Egypt Exploration Society. These artifacts provide a snapshot of life at the end of the Eighteenth Dynasty in Egypt.

Over the years the collection grew. It rapidly outgrew its case in the administration building's office, and took over a wing of the building. Known at that time as the Oriental Museum, the museum was open to the public, and began its tradition of education for the children of the region, which continues to this day.

By the 1960s it became clear that the collection was outgrowing its home in the wing of the administration building, and a new

dedicated museum was designed. Opened in 1966, the museum is designed in an Egyptian architectural style. Bronze doors open between pylons in the form of ancient temples. The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum is the only collection housed in a building authentic to ancient Egypt in style. The new building fostered a renewed dedication to its educational program, and as many as 40,000 children visit the museum each year with their classes.

Today, the museum houses a collection of over 4,000 artifacts, as well as a collection of replicas and scale models used in the educational program and for tours for the sight-impaired. The artifacts in the collection are considered ambassadors from the ancient world and are used to educate students and visitors alike in the lives of the people of the ancient world. Educational labels and a narrative path lead the visitor from the beliefs the Egyptians held about the Afterlife to their everyday lives. The Egyptians are truly brought to life through their personal possessions and their own words.

The research of the collection advances each year and helps foster greater understanding of ancient lives. The museum's collection is today supplemented by the Peace Garden of Rosicrucian Park, which is based, appropriately enough, on excavated examples from the archaeological ruins of Tell el-Amarna. The garden contains authentic Egyptian garden plants, both medicinal and edible, and offers the visitor a further chance to step back in time.

Additionally, the Rosicrucian Planetarium affords the chance for science-minded visitors to see the ancient skies. Taken together, the museum and park offer the chance to step back in time and learn about a people long gone.

Today, the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum collects, preserves, researches, and interprets objects that depict the achievements of ancient civilizations to promote public understanding of history and the cultural interactions that have led to our time. The museum serves the diverse communities of Northern California and beyond as a catalyst for learning. Science is a welcome visitor in the museum, as it always has been, and is used to better understand the ancient world.

In her role in founding our museum, Sekhmet defied her reputation as a goddess of destruction. We continue to serve the dream of Dr. H. Spencer Lewis and his little Sekhmet, the mother of our museum, immortalized in our accession records as the very first artifact, "RC #1."



AFTERLIFE

"You live again, you revive always, you have become young again, you are young again, forever."

—Ancient Egyptian funerary spell[1]

The gateway of interest for many people to the culture of the ancient Egyptians is Death. From the earliest reports of Egyptian mummification by Herodotus of ancient Greece,[2] to the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb in the last century,[3] people the world over have been fascinated by the death practices of ancient Egypt.

For this reason, many museum collections are heavily weighted with the paraphernalia of the deceased. Collections throughout the world are filled with coffins and mummies. Even the implements used in daily life often come from tombs. Early archaeologists, and the treasure hunters before them, had a limited view of human culture, believing that everything one needed to know about a culture could be learned from the historical records of governments and the death practices. If these early archaeologists came upon a town site, they would usually pull up stakes and move to another location for excavation. This is the reason why many museum collections are slanted toward the materials of the Afterlife.

The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum is no exception. Much of the collection of the early years also focused on the Afterlife. However, we choose to use this as a gateway to discuss the lives and beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, rather than simply focus on just the short incident of death.

The Egyptians performed all of the rites of death, from washing, to mummification, to the "Opening of the Mouth" ceremony, with one purpose in mind: eternal life. There is nothing strange about this, as all cultures have a standard way of dealing with the mystery of death. As the Egyptians themselves said, "All of them will come to it, none may linger in the Land of Egypt. There is none who does not arrive in it."[4] Given this fact, the Egyptians mummified their dead to preserve the body, and, they hoped, the soul.

Practices changed over time. The culture lasted for millennia and must be taken as a whole. The earliest attempts at mummification took place over 5,000 years ago, during the Early Dynastic Period. The poorer people were buried out in the desert, as had been done for countless generations. Their bodies were naturally preserved by the desert's aridity. Those with access to wealth chose to set themselves apart with their burial practices. But the wealthy discovered a problem with their newfound riches and the cultural choices they made. Wealth gave them the opportunity for burial in elaborate tombs. Once the body was buried in anything other than the dry desert soil, it began to deteriorate rapidly, and so the wealthy had to find a new method to preserve their human remains. What the poor received for free in the desert, the wealthy bought

◀ **Coffin Detail** *(RC 495)*. See page 14.

for a price. At first, the affluent allowed their corruptible remains to be defleshed, resulting in secondary burials that were often more like ossuaries ("bone boxes"), than coffins.[5] Attempts continued to make fewer of the remains corruptible, and from this, mummification progressed.

The earliest attempts at mummification consisted of wrapping the body in linen and soaking it with resin. The earliest practitioners did not understand that the deterioration progressed from the inside out, instead attempting to protect the surface of the body. Although this was not very effective, some tissue remains have been found from this time period.[6] The body would be placed in a small coffin in a fetal position. Grave goods such as jewelry and vessels, including wine jars, would be placed in the burial chamber, which was often near the king or queen's mastaba if the deceased possessed high enough rank.

By the time of the Old Kingdom, the science of mummy-making was improving. The body was wrapped in linen and coated with resin. Coffins were rectangular at this time, and the body was placed in an extended position. Grave goods were more elaborate for the nobles and included personal possessions. The focus of the funerary cult was a false door, or *ka* door, placed in the offering chamber of the tomb, or in a niche outside the tomb. These stelae were very standardized in style and were based on the royal artists' workshops. Much of the material came from these workshops, and all were considered gifts from the king.[7]

When the political system of the ancient Egyptian state collapsed in the First Intermediate Period, probably due to low floods and famine, burial practices became much more private. Regional rulers, called "nomarchs," were buried in rock-cut tombs in cliffs near their towns. Offering stelae largely replaced false doors, but performed the same function. They would be placed over the entrance to the tomb. The family would leave offerings in bowls and bottles in front of these stelae.[8] As evidenced in our own collection, the First Intermediate Period stelae often show entire family groups, perhaps emphasizing the importance of the family during times of political upheaval. The grave goods continued to consist of personal possessions, and tomb models of servants, meant to magically come to life and perform work in the Afterlife, begin to make their appearance.

The Middle Kingdom was a period of reinstatement of the royal government system, and was a time of reintegration of the national identity, but also a time of standardization of arts, including those of burial. The body was buried in a rectangular coffin, wrapped in a great deal of linen, and placed on its side. The reason for the sideways burial was the design of the coffins: eyes were painted on the eastern side of the coffin. The body would be placed in position so that the eyes could "see" out of the painted eyes and watch the sun rise each day as a metaphor for resurrection. This was also the golden age of tomb models. Servant models were not only present in the tomb, but they were depicted performing specialized tasks, such as brewing beer and grinding grain. Boats were quite popular, not only military boats, but boats with coffins for magical burial at Abydos, the town in which Osiris, the

god of the dead, was honored, having been raised from the dead by his wife Isis.[9] False doors were often replaced with offering trays set on the ground near the tomb. Water was poured over them to "activate" the foods carved on the surface for those in the next world.[10]

The New Kingdom was the golden age of Afterlife arts, as well as of Egypt itself. The procedures of mummification had become somewhat standardized, enough to describe the process of dealing with the body after death. There was also a gradual but steady increase in access for more of the people of Egypt to the once luxurious materials of the Afterlife, as well.

When most ancient Egyptians died, they likely died at home. There were really no hospitals as such, although some temples were centers of learning and healing.[11] The family would begin a formal mourning process and prepare for the funeral. Even though they believed their actions would assure eternal life, it would be difficult to live on in the face of a loved one's absence.

The body was taken to the *ibw*, the place of washing, where the body would be ritually bathed. The family would then leave the body there, for they had much work to do. All of the family had to be informed of the loss so they could attend the funeral, the tomb had to be finished, and the dead person's property had to be gathered for the tomb. Much of the collections of the world's museums come from tomb caches, for the environment in the rock-cut tombs was ideal for preservation of the property of the ancient Egyptians.

Mummification was completed in the *pr nfr*, the "good house." The body was eviscerated through an incision in the left flank. Certain organs—the lungs, stomach, liver, and intestines—were saved for the tomb. The Egyptians believed that one had to take all the important body parts into the Afterlife, yet the organs could not be left in the abdomen, where they would risk deterioration. The solution to this dilemma resulted in a set of canopic jars, special vessels for the mummified remains of the organs. At various times, the organs were alternatively returned to the body, dried out, and wrapped.[12]

The brain was not considered to be of any importance in the Afterlife. Although doctors in ancient Egypt knew of the brain's function, it served no religious purpose. Doctors were responsible for the living, but in death, the priests took over, and they discarded the brain as useless in the Afterlife.[13]

Once dried, the body was anointed and wrapped with linen. Within the wrappings were placed amulets, carved and cast figures believed to have magical properties of protection. A mask was often placed over the face of the mummy. The Egyptians had more than one purpose in the process of mummification. They believed the soul had to recognize the body after death or it would wander homeless. The mask made it easy for the soul to recognize its body. It was also often decorated with magical formulae and the name of the deceased.

The tomb was the final resting place of the now-mummified body. This was the *pr heh*, the "house of eternity," for the eternal life of the deceased. It was filled with the personal property of the tomb owner for transport to the hereafter.

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The mummy was placed in a coffin which was sometimes a simple rectangle, and at other times in the shape of a person. This was placed inside a sarcophagus, if the person was wealthy enough to afford one or lucky enough to have received one as a gift from the king. Almost all coffins had this formula written on them: *htp di nisw*, "a gift given by the king." This was a throwback to earliest custom in Egypt, when only the king had access to decent grave goods and was good enough to share these with his staff and family. Eventually, all people made this glorious claim, whether true or not.

The tomb entrance was the location of the activating ritual of the funeral, the "opening of the mouth" ceremony. The final act of the spell was the touching of a model adze to the mouth of the mummy, and the ritual recitation of the words, "You are young again, you shall live again, you are young again forever." Following this declaration, the family celebrated with a meal. They believed they had fulfilled their funerary duty, as they had set the soul of the dead free to follow its path to judgment and final transformation into an *akh*, an effective and justified spirit.[14]

The familial duty did not end with the burial for either the dead or the living. The living were expected to provide the spirit of the dead with offerings of food and drink. In return, the dead were expected to watch over the living, granting health to the children and wealth to the home. Life was a circle that never really ended for the ancient Egyptians. Whether alive or dead, you had a responsibility to your family. This was the purpose of the tomb: a place to bury the body, yes, but also a place to interact with one's ancestors.

The purpose of all of this was to create a dream, a dream of eternal life. It was *life*, rather than death, the Egyptians strove to preserve. The only improvement they could conceive of for their Afterlives was freedom from illness and unity with the gods. Otherwise, the Egyptian Afterlife was very much like daily life. They loved their lives and made tombs to preserve them in their entirety. It is largely through the materials of death that we know what it was like to live in ancient Egypt.

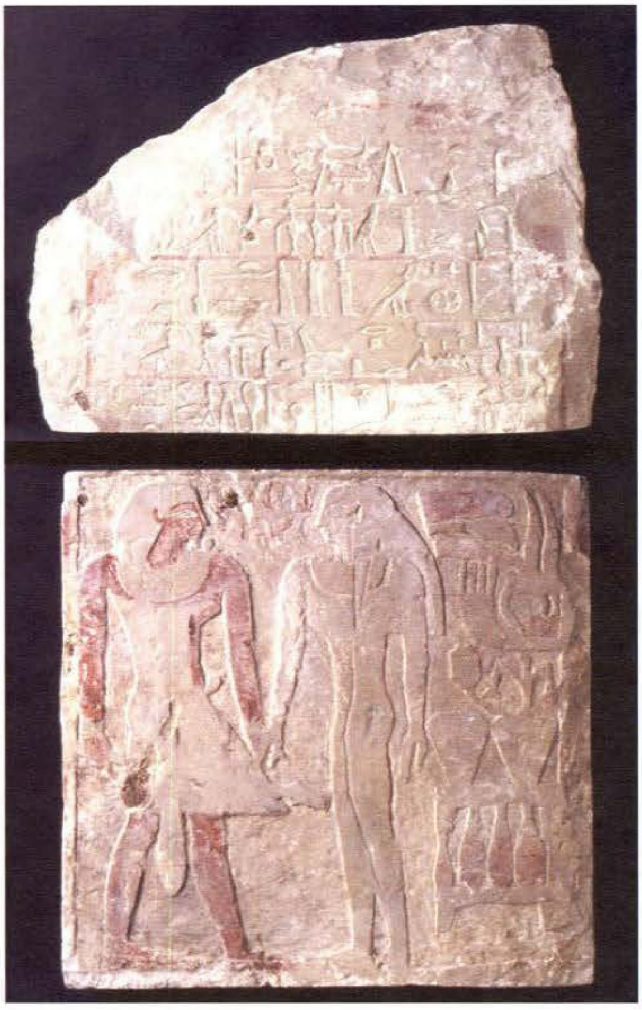
> *"I was a citizen excellent in combat, a companion of excitement. I was one loved by his father, praised by his mother, loved by his brothers and liked by his relations. No one would be found who spoke against the revered Indi."*
>
> Funerary inscription of the Nomarch Indi of This, c. 2100 BC[15]



> *"Those to be born, to millions of millions, all of them will come to it. No one may linger in the land of Egypt, there is none who does not arrive in it. As to the time of deeds on earth, it is the occurrence of a dream. One says: 'Welcome safe and sound,' to him who reaches the West."*
>
> Harper's song from the tomb of Neferhotep, c. 1200 BC[16]



Offering Door of Henuti
Offering doors were the altars of the tomb, a place for the family to deliver funerary offerings to the deceased. This door is dedicated to the Lady Henuti, whose titles are not listed. The image of the lady appears to have been changed in antiquity, perhaps recycled for another owner.
(RC 1735; Dynasty 5; limestone; h: 77.5 cm)



Husband and Wife
Husband and wife are portrayed in an intimate pose on this unusual relief from the First Intermediate Period. The wife is identified as "Senet, the wife whom he loves," emphasizing both the importance of women in this time period, as well as personal affection between man and wife.
(RC 2574; First Intermediate Period; 46x62 cm)



Offering Tray ▲
The inscription on this altar reads: "judge, the overseer of the scribes, priest of Ma'at, inspector of the scribes, Hordjedef, loyal supporter of the god, Iteti, chief of the secrets of Re, in the temple of Nehen-Re." Hordjedef worked in the Sun Temple of King Userkaf at the end of the Old Kingdom.
(RC 1684; Early First Intermediate Period; limestone; 26x36 cm)

Offering Tray ▼
This fine offering tray bears the traditional offering formula for the ka of the deceased.
(RC 2990; Dynasty 12; limestone; 33x39 cm)





Stele of Iry and His Wife, Meru
The First Intermediate Period produced artwork that emphasized the family and personal relations, rather than contact with the king, as there really was none. In this stele, the titles dominate, but the figures are of equal size and are in an intimate pose.
(RC 2067; First Intermediate Period; limestone; 48x68 cm)

Offering Tray ▼
The less wealthy individuals of the Middle Kingdom resorted to ceramic offering altars. The molded images of food acted as the real items, magically, when water was poured over them.
(RC 2183; Middle Kingdom; ceramic; diam: 20 cm)

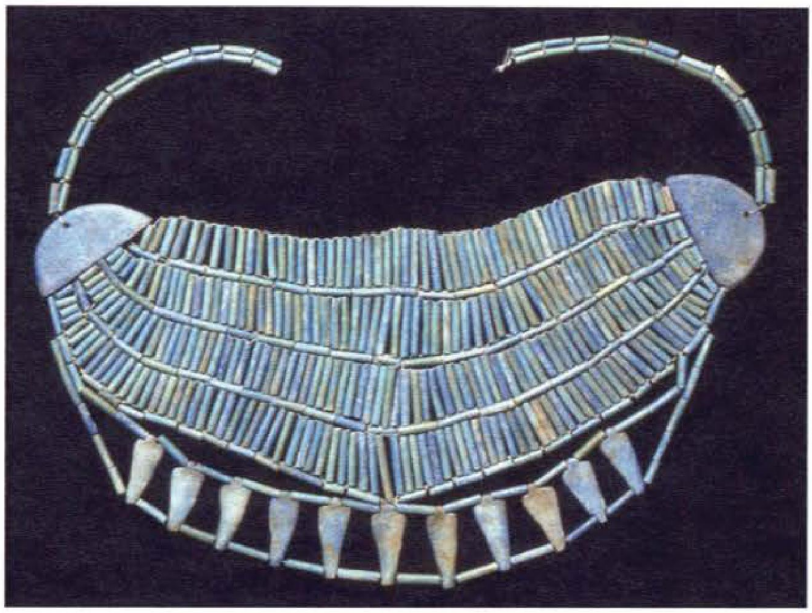




Granary Model ▲
Granaries were required in the Afterlife, to assure an endless supply of grain, and models such as this one filled the need. It even includes a scribe to record the amount of grain placed in the granary, to ensure that no theft occurred.
(RC 687; Dynasty 11; wood, pigment; 19x22x33 cm)

Brewery Model
Beer was one of the staples of the ancient Egyptian diet and was a necessity for the Afterlife, as well. Tomb models such as this were as good as having live workers in the Afterlife. This model was included in a tomb to provide perpetual beer for the tomb owners.
(RC 483; Dynasty 11; wood, pigment; 25x51x21 cm)

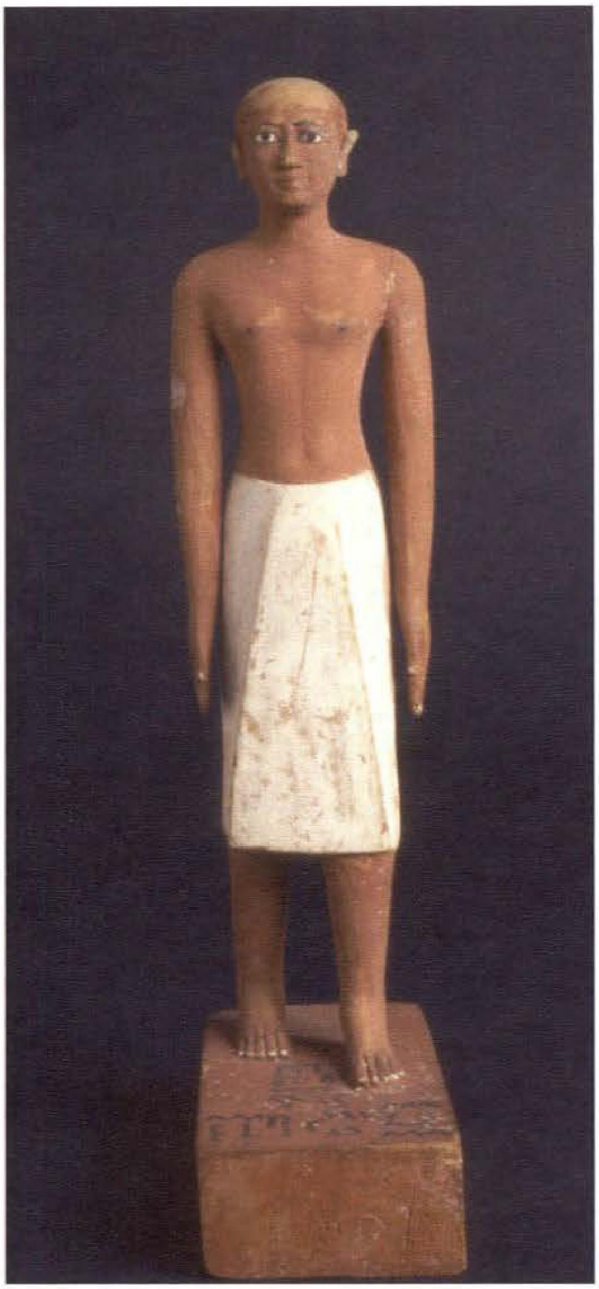




Wesekh Collar
The Middle Kingdom was considered the fine age of Egyptian jewelry. This fine example of a wesekh broad collar necklace was most likely worn by a noble individual during life, who took it with him into the tomb.
(RC 1835; Middle Kingdom; faience; 21x35 cm)

Funerary Boat
This funerary boat was made to fulfill a pilgrimage in the Afterlife: the need to visit Abydos, the holy place in Egypt where the god Osiris was believed to have been entombed. This boat includes the coffin of the deceased and even the mourning wife, acting out the role of Isis.
(RC 480; Middle Kingdom; wood, pigment; l: 54 cm)





Senebi the Overseer
The ka was believed to need an alternative "home" in case of damage to the body. Images such as this one were made as a focus for the ka of the deceased, who is an overseer named Senebi, in this case.
(RC 1575; Middle Kingdom; wood, pigment; h: 31 cm)



Funerary Figure
Although of poorer quality than Senebi's funerary image, this man's statue fills the same role. Some images of this type have been found in small shrines, almost like little houses, and may have been the focus of the family's funerary cult.
(RC 1691; Middle Kingdom; wood, pigment; h: 31 cm)



Plowing Man with Oxen
All aspects of daily life were believed to be mirrored in the Egyptian Afterlife. This image of a plowing man with oxen was meant to assure rich farmland and a supply of grain through magical representation in the tomb.
(RC 1810; Dynasty 12; wood, pigment; 19x29x22 cm)

Soldier Boat
Needs in the Afterlife mimicked those of this plane, in the Egyptian view. Therefore, the tomb of a Middle Kingdom noble might include a contingent of soldiers to either fight in a battle or perhaps protect the tomb.
(RC 484; Middle Kingdom; wood, pigment; l: 96 cm)





Coffin of Mesehti (detail)
The Lady of the House Mesehti was buried in the town of Asyut. This detail from her coffin displays her table of food. The inscription lists gods and goddesses in married pairs. The details of the style of the coffin tell us that this was made in Asyut.
(RC 2822; Dynasty 11-12; wood, plaster; pigment; 43x179x43 cm)

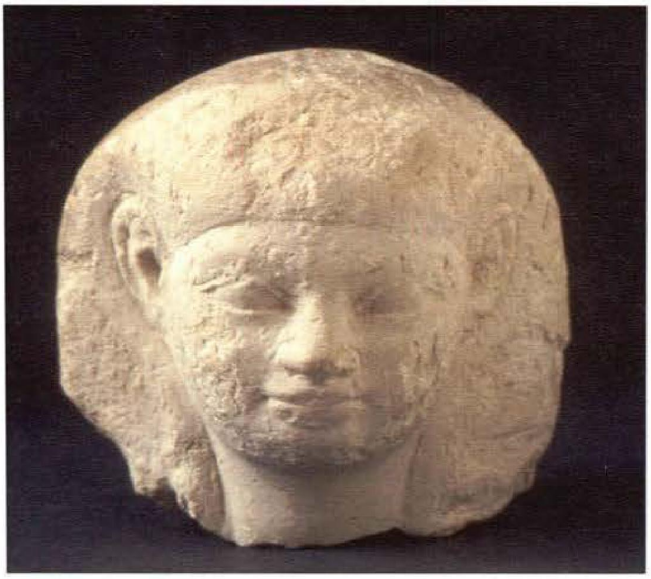
Model Offerings
Families believed that the image of an item was as good as the item itself. This group of offering models represent a bull's leg, beef, quite clearly. Perhaps less obvious are the faience offerings, which represent fruit and other items in an impermeable material.
(RC 578, 1117, 1118; Middle Kingdom; wood, pigment, and faience; l: 2 cm-13 cm)

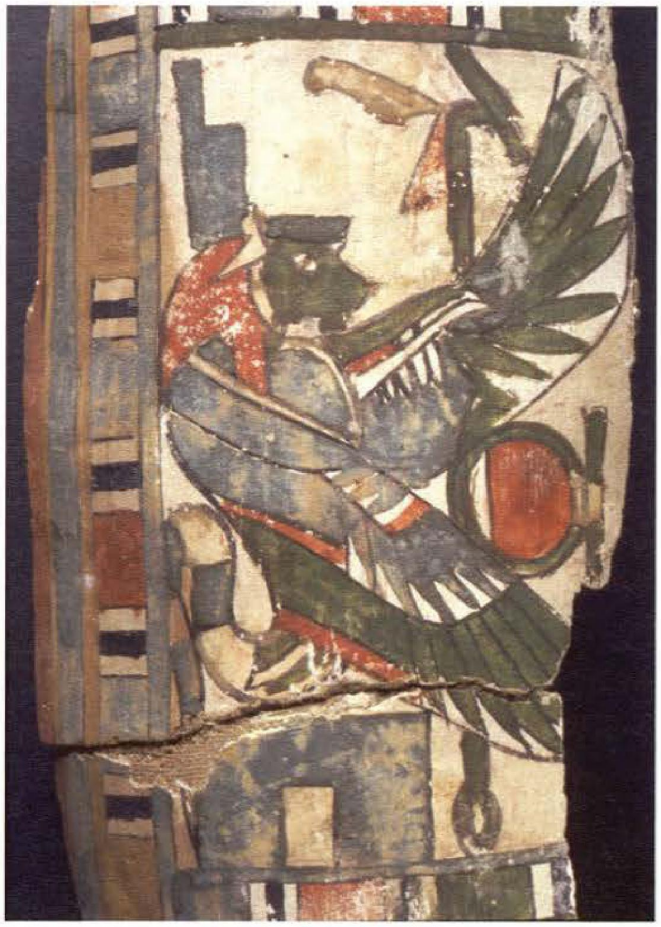




Coffin Fragment of Pen-Amun
This particularly fine fragment of a coffin came from that of Pen-Amun, a master of sculptors, who may well have incised his own coffin.
(RC 2059; New Kingdom: wood and pigment; l: 40 cm)

Lid of a Lady's Canopic Jar ▼
Women expected the same Afterlife as men, and they required the same items to arrive there successfully. This small masterpiece, probably the broken lid of a canopic jar, depicts this small, anonymous lady as a beautiful young woman, even though she may have died an old woman.
(RC 1811; Dynasty 18; limestone; h: 9 cm)





Goddess on a Coffin Fragment
Many aspects of different goddesses are represented on this one image. The headdress of Isis, the face of Sekhmet, the color of Wadjet, and the wings of Mut combine into a protective and powerful image.
(RC 501; Dynasty 22; cartonnage; h: 40 cm)



Pyramidion
The top of a small private pyramid of the New Kingdom was called a pyramidion. This fine example is dedicated to the tomb of the Royal Scribe, Ahmose, in Thebes, whose name and title are legible in spite of incidental damage. One side of the pyramidion, however, was intentionally damaged in antiquity. The tomb was possibly that of the Ahmose who worked during the reign of King Akhenaten, who was proscribed after his death. The one side of the pyramidion was carefully chipped out, as though to remove the inscription, without damaging the tomb.
(RC 1726; Dynasty 18; limestone; h: 36 cm)

Detail of a Coffin
The god Thoth, or Djehuti in ancient Egyptian, was the Scribe of Judgment. When the deceased made his Negative Declaration asserting a life well-lived, Djehuti took notes. He appears to be particularly skeptical of the declarations in this example.
(RC 615; Dynasty 19; wood and pigment; 26x61 cm)





White Coffin of Disure
Disure was a priest and scribe at the start of the Eighteenth Dynasty and was the individual for whom this rare White Coffin was made. This dynasty began with the expulsion of the Hyksos, rulers foreign to Egypt. The yellow bands on the coffin are meant to represent gold.
(RC 1678; early Dynasty 18; wood and paint; l: 197 cm)

Coffin Detail ▶
The gods line up on this coffin fragment, both protecting and honoring the deceased. Cartonnage coffins such as this were used in the Late Period as inner coffins, fitting tightly to the body within outer coffins.
(RC 495; Late New Kingdom; cartonnage; h: 18 cm)





Shabti of a Lady
The standard offering formula gives us the name of the owner of this shabti: the Chantress of Hathor, Mistress of the Sycamore, Tuya. The high quality of this shabti tells us that the owner had access to artisans.
(RC 294; Dynasty 19; steatite; h: 15 cm)

Faience Shabti
Shabti of Pa-hws-mst, the Overseer of the Treasury. Faience shabtis became standard and common due to the ease of their mass production. During the Late Period, vast numbers of shabtis were placed in each tomb, while in the Middle Kingdom, there was commonly only one.
(RC 127; Dynasty 20; faience; h: 12 cm)



Shabti Box of a Chantress of Amun with Shabti
The *Shemayt*, or Chantress, of Amun-Re, Djed-Ma'at-Ius-Ankh, was the owner of this box made for her collection of shabtis, or worker images, in her tomb.
(RC 422, 526; Dynasty 22; wood; 32x38 cm)





Yellow Coffin of a Chantress of Amun
This yellow coffin was made with the highest workmanship, but does have one flaw: the name of the owner is not painted on the coffin. Her name may have been placed on the lid, now missing. We can read that the owner was a Chantress of Amun, or *Shemayt*, in the temple.
(RC 1830; Dynasty 19; wood and pigment; l: 191 cm)



Coffin Face
Anthropomorphic coffins included an idealized image of the deceased on the lid of the coffin. This lady is depicted with the pale skin tone that often appeared during the Ptolemaic Period and in some earlier periods.
(RC 267; New Kingdom; wood and pigment; h: 32 cm)



Malachite Pigmented Funerary Stele
Funerary stelae were of two types: private and donation. Private stelae were made with the intention of being viewed by family and friends. Finer, more formal stelae, such as this one, were made for public viewing, such as in a temple or formal memorial.
(RC 1584; New Kingdom; limestone, pigment; h: 51 cm)

Shrine Amulet ▶
Jewelry of ancient Egypt performed a dual purpose: to be beautiful, but also to be magically protective. This large amulet was worn on the chest and is in the shape of a shrine.
(RC 247; Late Period; faience; h: 10 cm)

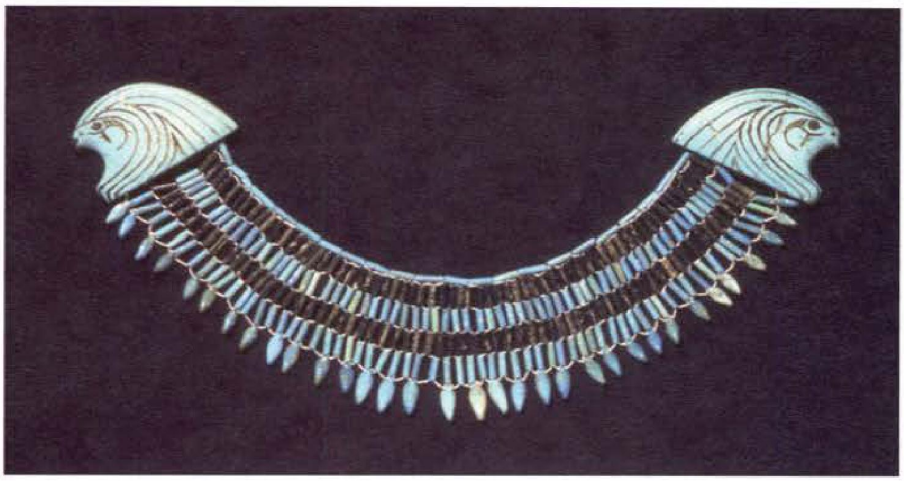




New Kingdom Shabti
Huwy's shabti, shown here, was of the standard New Kingdom type. Made of wood and painted with detail, the inscription is simply a formula ensuring the loyal work of the shabti for Huwy after death.
(RC 2242; New Kingdom; wood and pigment; h: 23 cm)



Funerary Amulets
(RC 1091, 5195, 29, 30, 1092, 1093; New Kingdom; faience, stone; 1-3 cm)



Wesekh Collar
The broad or wesekh collar protected the body of the deceased in the coffin. An actual wesekh collar was placed on the mummy, while a back-up wesekh collar was often painted on the wrappings as well.
(RC 1773; Saite Period; faience; l: 54 cm)

Canopic Jars of Psamtik
Named, perhaps, for the king at the time of his birth, the priest Psamtik was the owner of these canopic jars. The artisan who fashioned the jars made a mistake: one of the jars places Psamtik's name in a cartouche as if he were the king. This error was not repeated on the other three jars.
(RC 1816, 2250, 2251, 2252; Saite Period; calcite; h: 37 cm)





Shabti
These shabtis, the one on the left belonging to Yeret-Hor-At, were manufactured during Saite Period for use in the tomb.
(RC 2222, 532, 1508; Dynasty 26; limestone and faience; h: up to 17 cm)



Djed Pillar
This magical amulet, the Djed Pillar, represented stability, and was intended to keep the mummy in one piece for all eternity.
(RC 50; Third Intermediate Period; faience; h: 10 cm)



Stele of Ptah-ir-dis
Ptah-ir-dis was the son of Pedi-Bast and of the Lady of the House Neith-ir-dis. Ptah-ir-dis was an important scribe and official during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, also called the Kushite Dynasty. His stele probably came from Aswan, in spite of the references to Northern gods in the family's names.
(RC 1671; Dynasty 25-26; basalt; h: 53 cm)

(back detail)





Block Figure of Germa
Germa was the son of Atum-ir-dis. The inscription invokes both Wadjet and Isis. The king referenced on the front near the naos shrine is Apries.
(RC 1736; Dynasty 25; limestone; h: 24 cm)



Stele of a Songstress of Amun
This Lady of the House was also a temple musician in her own right. This fine stele of wood reminds us of the high value and status of women in ancient Egyptian society. Her husband is not named, but her parents are.
(RC 1606; Dynasty 26; wood and paint; h: 41 cm)

Footboard of a Cartonnage Coffin
This is the footboard of a cartonnage mummy wrapping. The mummy was placed in the cartonnage tube, and this small footboard was laced into place to hold the mummy in place. The leaping bull protects the feet.
(RC 502; Dynasty 22; wood and paint; 19x29 cm)





Fragment of the Tomb of Montuemhat
The regional ruler Montuemhat was the de facto ruler of Thebes during the Assyrian invasion. Artifacts from his tomb are scattered around the world. This fragment gives an idea of the quality of workmanship dedicated to this archaized monument, which he had made based on examples from the Old Kingdom, 2,000 years previous.
(RC 1580; Dynasty 26; limestone; 20x44 cm)



Saite Coffin of Tahure (detail)
Eyes were important to the Egyptians and often appeared on coffins with the purpose of seeing the dawn. The east was the direction of life and renewal to Egyptians, so the ability of the Lady of the House Tahure to see the sun rise for all eternity was imperative.
(RC 1677; Dynasty 26; wood and pigment; coffin length: 1.9 m)



Fish Mummy
Nile catfish was a staple of the diet, although the ancient Egyptians wrestled with the propriety and cleanliness of the concept of eating bottom-feeding fish. This mummy was donated to a temple in the north of Egypt.
(RC 2182; Late Period; fish mummy; l: 55 cm)



Gazelle Mummy
Gazelles were kept as household pets and mummified, as they were associated with the god Seth. This mummy was that of a sacrifice, as it is very juvenile, unlike other gazelles which were very old when they died, leading us to believe they were honored pets rather than sacrifices.
(RC 1570; Dynasty 22-Late Period; gazelle mummy; l: 46 cm)



Osiris Funerary Stele
The informality and low quality of this stele imply that this was made as a private stele, rather than for the purpose of donation to a temple or public place. Stelae of this type were often made of painted wood.
(RC 1728; Third Intermediate Period; limestone; h: 25 cm)

Shabti Jar ▼
The ever-increasing number of shabtis included in each tomb required various storage methods, resulting in this oddity: the shabti jar. Funerary images cover this elaborately painted jar, meant to hold the shabti. While the shabtis of the time were simple and mass-produced, the jars became elaborate.
(RC 1975; Late Period; painted ceramic; h: 30 cm)





Ba Bird ▲
Human-headed images such as this represent the ba bird, an aspect of the soul believed to fly out of the tomb. Egyptologists suspect the ba was based on the bat, which lived in the tombs and flew out at dusk.
(RC 123; Late Period; wood and paint; h: 10 cm)



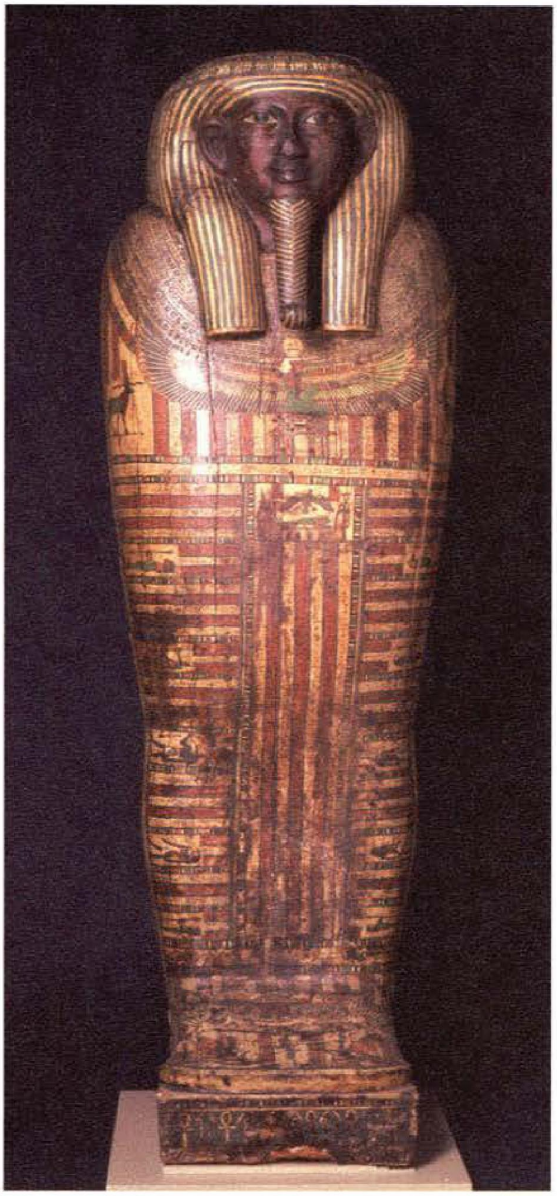
Funerary Cone
Funerary cones were used to decorate the door frames of tombs in Thebes of the New Kingdom. This cone is from the tomb of the wife of the Third Prophet of Amun.
(RC 505; New Kingdom; ceramic; diam: 9.5 cm)





Ptah-Sokar-Osiris
Important for the funerary cults and rebirth, the images of Ptah-Sokar-Osiris, a combined god, were used for magical regeneration. Their ancestors were the "corn mummies," made to ensure a good harvest.
(RC 625; Late Period; wood and paint; h: 37 cm)

Ba Bird
Also associated with the god Sokar, these images frequently decorated funerary equipment in the tomb.
(RC 512; Ptolemaic Period; wood and paint; h: 7 cm)

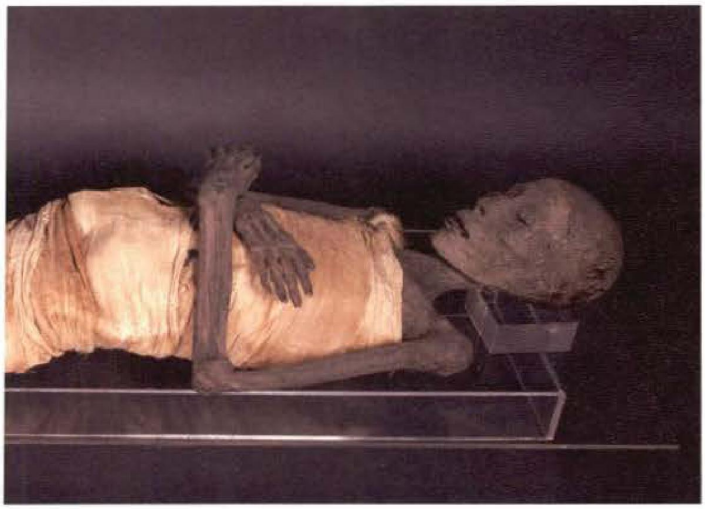


Coffin of Usermontu
Usermontu, the priest of Montu, Lord of Thebes, was a son of Besenmut and a close relative of Ta'awa-Sherit, possibly a cousin. Coincidentally, these coffins made their way to the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum, and the family is now at least partially reunited. This family was very powerful during the turmoil of the Saite Period.
(RC 1777; Dynasty 25-26; wood and paint; h: 179 cm)

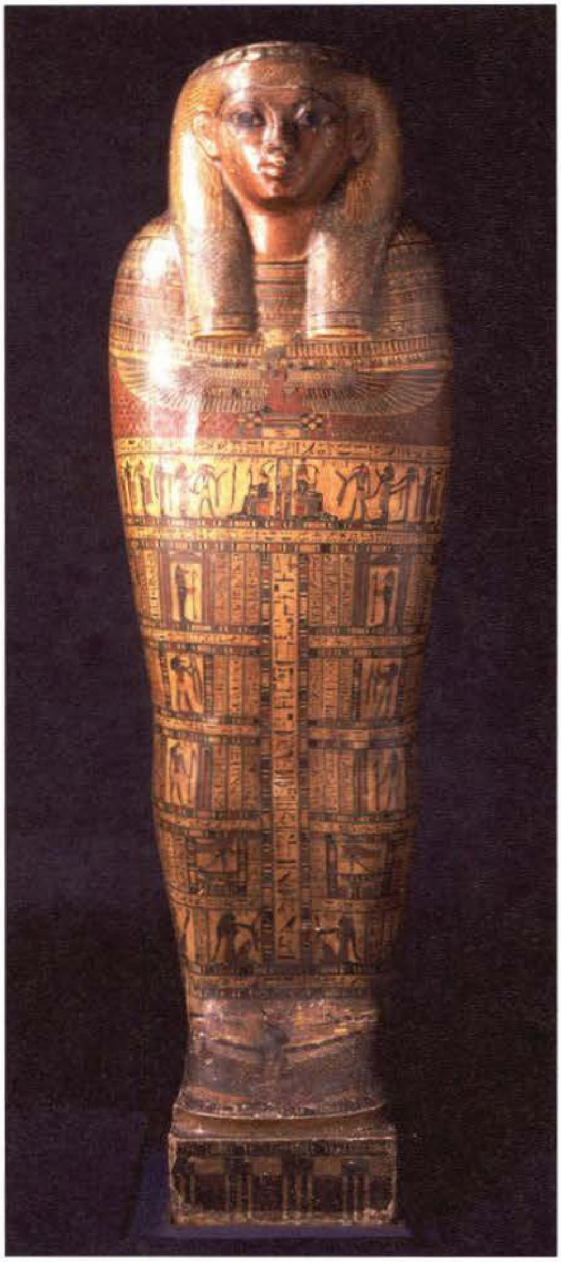


Mummy from Usermontu's Coffin ▲
This male mummy has long been an enigma. He does not display the traditional style of mummification of the time period of the coffin in which he arrived. A piece of adhered linen from his wrist dates to 400 BC, but the style of mummification leans toward the Ramesside Period, although perhaps slightly later. The controversy: crossed arms on a mummy of that time period tells us he could well be royalty.
(RC 1779; New Kingdom-Late Period; human mummy; l: 155 cm)

Shabti of Horwedja ▶
The tomb of Horwedja, in Hawara near the Faiyum, was excavated by the great archaeologist Sir W.M.F. Petrie. An amazingly wealthy tomb, Horwedja was buried surrounded by hundreds of shabtis like this one, standing in ranks.
(RC 1258; Dynasty 26; faience; h: 19 cm)







Coffin of Ta'awa
The Lady of the House Ta'awa was from a very prominent family of the Saite Period. Her father, Hori, was priest of Montu, Lord of Thebes, and relative of Besenmut. Ta'awa's own titles, "Lady of the House" and "Noble Lady," tell us little of her own activities, but her brother, Ankh-Hor, was also a priest of Montu.
(RC 2071; Dynasty 26; wood and paint; h: 174 cm)



Recumbent Anubis
Coffins of the Late Period were decorated with many sculptures in the round of funerary images and cult figures. Anubis would guard the exterior of the coffin, while ba birds were posted at the four corners.
(RC 124; Late Period; wood; 22x40 cm)

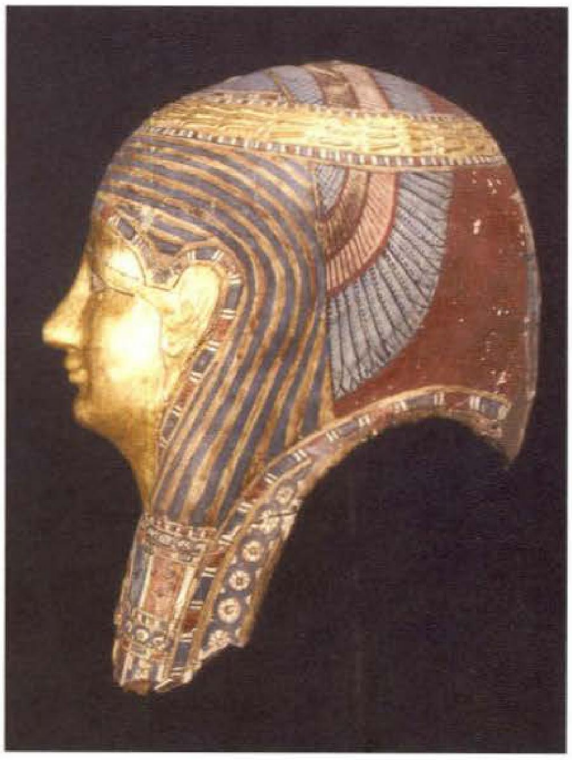


Funerary Mask from Sais
This mask of a lady of the city of Sais was not made with the high quality of the gilt funerary mask shown on page 29, but it does have some interesting traits. The scorpion protecting the top of the deceased woman's head, for instance, tells us it came from Sais, the home of Serqet, the scorpion goddess.
(RC 102; Greco-Roman; cartonnage; 33x27 cm)



Coffin of Ta-Di-Na-Nefer
The coffins of the Ptolemaic Period are characterized by a more Greek feel: the colors of the face, and the shape of the ears, date this coffin to the Ptolemaic Period. The owner of this coffin was a lady named Ta-Di-Na-Nefer, a name which translates to "she was granted beauty." Her other titles include "Lady of the House," a title of honor in ancient Egypt.
(RC 2186; Ptolemaic Period; painted wood; h: 172 cm)

Gilt Funerary Mask
A fine mask of high quality, this mask was placed over the head of a noble in the Ptolemaic Period. The gilt on the face was believed by the ancients to be basically the same as solid gold. The epithet of Hathor was "the Golden One," so she may be invoked simply through the gilding, while other goddesses are portrayed in detail.
(RC 101; Ptolemaic Period; gilded cartonnage; 40x19 cm)





Mummy of a Child
This child died when she was about four years of age. The dark material on the face of the child is the perfume she was anointed with as part of her funeral. She was of high status and well loved, as is shown by the high quality of her wrappings and the fact that she was well cared for. X-rays show she may have been crippled.
(RC 22; Roman Period; human mummy; 91x26 cm)

An Ideal Afterlife

"A goodly burial arrives in peace,
your days having been fulfilled
in your place of embalming.
The children of your children,
united of one accord, weep with loving hearts.
Your mouth is opened by the lector priest
and your purification
is performed by the Sem-priest.
You come in your former shape,
as on the day on which you were born.
You enter into land given by the king,
into the sepulchre of the West."[17]

New Kingdom funerary text



DAILY LIFE

"My sister's love is on yonder side, the river is between our bodies; the waters are mighty at flood-time, a crocodile awaits in the shallows."

—Ancient Egyptian love poem[1]

The daily lives of the ancient Egyptians followed a pattern of life and, at the best of times, displayed a stability to be envied in the ancient world. The people of Egypt expected the Nile River would routinely flood its banks and bring life-giving silt to the river valley. They would then plant and harvest their crops, and the king would receive his share through the tax collector. Year after year, this routine confirmed itself.

The people hoped that their daily lives would follow the same stable pattern. The home was seen as a place of stability and enjoyment. The ideal family worked together for the welfare of the extended family, who often lived together in one home or a complex of homes. Since most professions were inherited, the same stability seen in the larger picture of the land of Egypt could be seen in towns and homes: single families controlled the same professions through generations. Security in one's future existed from the earliest awareness of a child: if the child's father was a scribe or a fisherman, then the child would be a scribe or a fisherman as well.

Men most likely worked outside the home, although it was not unheard of for women to bear professional titles. We know about many of the trades that existed in ancient Egypt through scribal textbooks called the *Satires of the Trades*. While attending school in ancient Egypt, scribes in training would be expected to copy existing texts word for word. Many of these would be didactic in nature, and the *Satires of the Trades* were seen as a good way to train a scribe to enjoy his born profession, as opposed to envying the work of others. True to their name, the satires would list the trades and then mock them. Potters were said to be "smeared with soil, like one whose relations have died," and soldiers were said to be ". . . hungry, his belly hurts, he is dead while yet alive."[2] The very act of listing these trades, however, is useful to modern scholars in telling us about the various trades that existed, as well as revealing some of the details of the lifestyles and working techniques.

The workday in Egypt, whether one was a scribe or a butcher, was from dawn until dusk, with a long lunch break in the heat of the day. Remnants of lunches have been found on ancient construction sites in temporary structures. Ideally, though, one worked close enough to home to enjoy this time with the family.

However, the home was not simply a place to rest during or after a difficult day's work. The home was also the most basic element in the complex economy that was ancient Egypt. It was in the home that surplus items would be

◀ **Swimming Cattle Relief** *(RC 1724).* See page 42.

manufactured for trade or donation to the temples. The people in charge of this important production were the women of the family. The title of a woman who ran her own household was "Lady of the House," a term which in ancient times was equivalent to "Ruler of the House." Many of the wisdom texts of ancient Egypt recommended to the men studying them not to question the abilities of the wife in running the home when she had proven herself to be capable. The running of the household was seen as a task equivalent in importance to the generally male domain of work outside the home. It was a profession in its own right, and the title "Lady of the House" was an important one, worthy of note on funerary equipment. The Lady of the House ruled over the servants and, in some cases, slaves of the household. She was responsible for the behavior of the members of the household, from her own children to her servants. The Lady of the House was also responsible for keeping the household books and seeing to the proper honoring of the ancestors in the home.[3]

Ancestor worship in ancient Egypt was related to the nature of the Egyptians' concept of the Afterlife. Once the spirit of the deceased had passed into the next world and successfully passed judgment, it became an *akh*, an empowered one.[4] Akhs of one's ancestors were seen as family benefactors so long as they were properly appeased. Offerings were placed virtually every day in either the tomb or in a household shrine. These akhs were especially effective in protecting children, who were seen as helpless, yet at the same time as the future of the family line. For this reason, ancestors were also associated with fertility, since the final and perhaps most important responsibility of ancient Egyptians, both male and female, was to produce at least one child who lived to adulthood.

The people of ancient Egypt married young, in part because of the short lifespans of the ancient world, but also in the hope of producing many children. Most first marriages were arranged by parents, although they required the consent of the youngsters involved.[5] Matches between cousins were seen as ideal, since this kept family resources within the family, rather than dispersing them among other families. The marriage was consummated by the couple moving into a house together and their families exchanging gifts. These ritual exchanges often did not run smoothly, as several existing court complaints attest.[6] In the end, apparently, ancestors were the truest of relatives, and most funerary equipment lists parents as the primary affiliations in title formulae.

The divorce rate was high in ancient Egypt. Either a man or woman could initiate divorce. Both the man and the woman left the marriage with the property that was in their possession at the time of their marriage. Unusual in the ancient world, the wife retained control of her own property during her marriage. If she divorced, she also received one third of the community property. These facts show that women were seen to have value in their own right and were not simply an extension of their husbands or fathers. Women of means often commissioned tombs for themselves, the most important purchase an ancient Egyptian could make, and paid for them with their own funds.[7]

The most common reason for divorce was infertility, since one's Afterlife was assured by proper burial, for which a child was responsible. Women were usually blamed for infertility; hence the importance of fertility activities and rituals in the household magic of ancient Egypt. Objects often called "dolls" by early archaeologists were actually fertility fetishes made in the hope of manufacturing a reality through imagery. When a woman gave birth to a live child, a ritual followed in which the whole community participated. The woman's hair was plaited and her nude body was decorated. The best jewelry available was placed around her neck and a cowrie shell belt was draped around her hips. She was ritually passing from the care of Taweret, the hippopotamus goddess of pregnancy, back to Hathor, goddess of sexual love. Female figures with these decorative traits have been found in every context from home to tomb, and they were no doubt used to encourage fertility through magical art. Fertility was especially important because of the high mortality rate of children.[8]

Childhood in ancient Egypt was a very risky time. With mortality rates so high, parents could expect only half of their children to live to adulthood. There was a large spike in the death rate at the time of weaning, as children began to eat the contaminated foods of their parents, rather than the sterile breast milk of the mother.[9] Small children were seen as helpless and, whether rich or poor, they were under the protection of the god Bes, the small dancing dwarf god who protected the helpless. Amuletic jewelry depicting the god Bes was worn by children of all social strata in ancient Egypt in the hope of protection.

Children were not seen as passive recipients of their parents' largesse; they were expected to assist in the functioning of the household to the best of their abilities, based on their age. What might be called "chores" in the modern age were a fact of children's lives in Egypt and an expected contribution.

Boys of the scribal class were trained in the *Per Ankhw*, the "Houses of Life," attached to the temples for the training of young scribes and priests.[10] The ability to read was the most basic step in learning the professions, and so this was often the skill that separated the professionals from those who learned trades. Just as scribes attended schools, the children of skilled tradesmen learned their future trade at their father's or mother's knee from a very early age. A child would learn small helpful tasks as soon as weaning was done, and more challenging activities would eventually be added until the child was fully skilled in a trade.

Adulthood came with marriage and the establishment of a household. The inheritance of rank and position meant that sons and daughters would only achieve their full and formal rank upon the death of their parents. Part of the responsibility of adulthood included the requirement of properly burying one's parents and caring for their tomb and the tombs of other ancestors. One of the most important festivals of ancient Egypt was called the "Great Feast of the Valley." During this holiday, the king would visit the temples to honor his ancestors, and the images of the gods would travel to

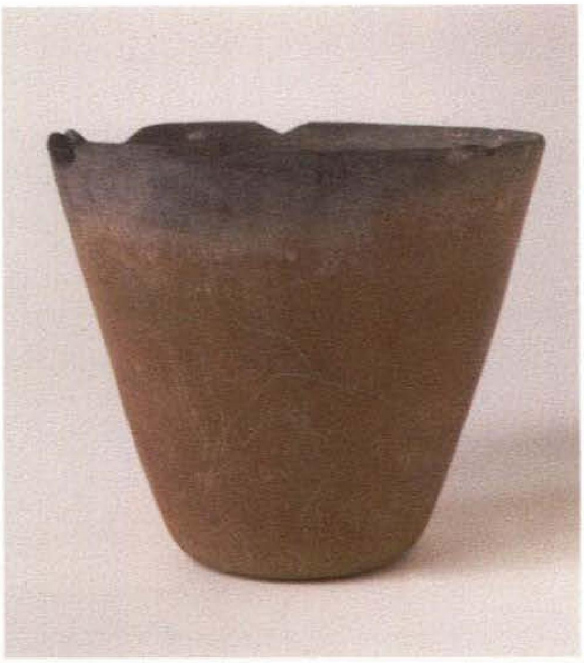
other gods' temples. The concept of family was paramount during this holiday, so the king visiting his ancestors and the gods visiting their relatives was perfectly consistent. Once the people had enjoyed the activities, which included parades and feasting, they were ready to fulfill their holiday responsibilities. Entire families would travel to the necropolis of their town and feast at the tomb of their ancestors. The tomb was called the "House of Eternity," so this visit was considered the same as visiting a home. News of the family would be given to the deceased in the offering chamber of the tomb, and a meal would be consumed. In this way, the permanent nature of family was confirmed, and extended families had the opportunity to meet and exchange news, and young people might meet and make arrangements for marriage.[11]

The Nile River was not only the great arbiter of regularity in ancient Egypt; it was the source of all life. Before the Old Kingdom, northeastern Africa was much wetter than it is in modern times. The area we call the Sahara was comprised of vast grasslands. Animal herders lived in these savannas. Gradually, beginning about 6,000 years ago, the area became more arid, slowly forcing the majority of the people to settle in the Nile Valley.[12] Some peoples managed to continue to eke out a life on the fringes of Egypt's farming society. They were still considered to be ethnic Egyptians, even though they pursued an unusual lifestyle.[13]

It was the Inundation, the annual flooding of the Nile, that made agriculture possible in Egypt. Heavy rains in Central Africa caused the headwaters of the Nile to engorge, sending life-giving water and silt northwards at the same time of year, every year. This flood filled the Nile Valley, laying down new fertile soil for planting. Because of the regularity and importance of the flood, the river itself was deified as Hapi, a hermaphroditic god of life and fertility. The regularity of the floods confirmed the importance of ma'at for the people of Egypt, and the king was considered responsible for maintaining the contentedness of the gods and perpetuating ma'at.

Life in ancient Egypt was ideal when it followed its regular patterns. Ma'at was this state of balance and perfection. People were responsible for maintaining ma'at in their own lives, while public officials and people in positions of responsibility perpetuated ma'at on a larger scale. The family was the center of everyone's activity and the primary sphere of concern, followed by one's town, and then the nation, for which the king was responsible. Ma'at, both large-scale and small, was required to make the universe function, and everyone had a small part in its creation.

> *"Rejoice in your heart! Forgetfulness profits you! Follow your heart as long as you live. Heap up your joys, let your heart not sink"*
>
> From the song of the tomb of King Intef, c. 2000 BC[14]

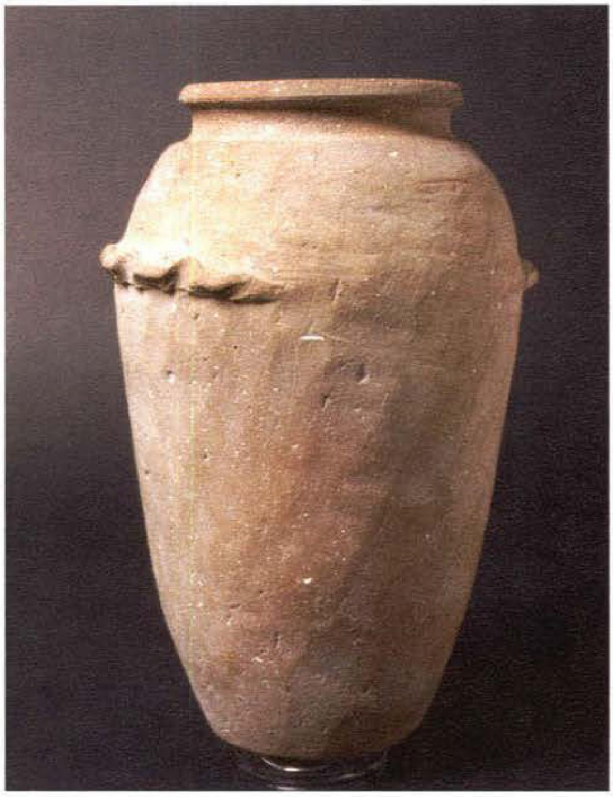


Predynastic Beaker
Black-topped pottery was characteristic of the earliest periods of Egyptian civilization. It was fired upside down with the top buried in sand, depriving the clay of oxygen and resulting in the distinct coloration. This beaker was excavated from a grave at Badari, but most likely was used during the owner's life to hold grain. This example bears an ancient image scratched on the side of a hunting dog attacking an ibex.
(RC 3066; Naqada II; ceramic; 9x6 cm)



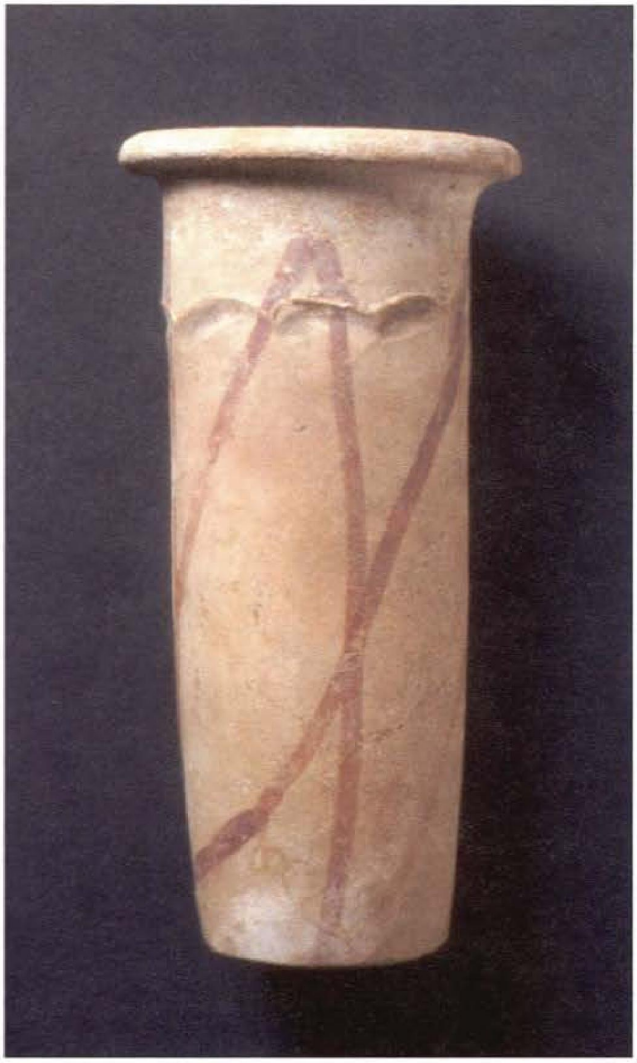
Lug-Handled Jar ▲
Hard stone vessels were a luxury item during the beginnings of the unification of Egypt. Only the wealthiest individuals could afford to hire an artisan to handcraft such an item, which had little use other than to display wealth. The lug handles on the sides of the jar were most likely meant for cords that suspended the jar so that its contents (probably cosmetics) were protected from rodents.
(RC 1610; Dynasty 2; gabbro; 10x17x14 cm)

Wavy-Handled Jar
The wavy-handled series of jars is very important for the dating of ancient Egyptian materials. The archaeologist Sir W.M.F. Petrie realized that there was a sequence to the style of the handles on this pottery. The first in the sequence is very similar to the pottery of the Levant, dating to 3200 BC, and used to haul trade goods from that area.
(RC 1221; Naqada III; ceramic; h: 25 cm)

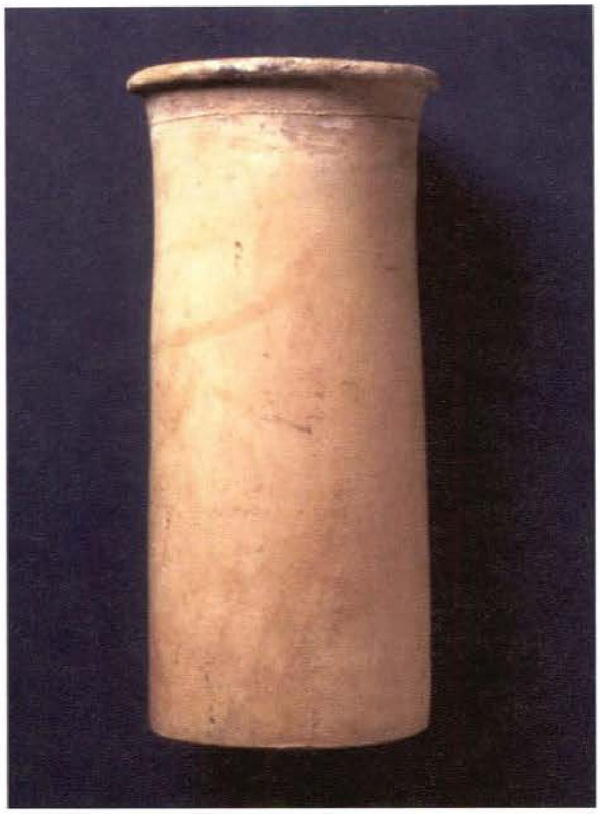




Jar
The handle of this jar, second in the sequence, has now become even more schematic. Jars of this type would be suspended from the roof posts with a net. The design of a net is painted on the sides of this jar, so as to make artistically permanent that which was ephemeral in reality.
(RC 1221; Naqada III; ceramic; h: 28 cm)



Net Jar
This jar, third in the sequence, displays a much more simplified handle, now more a design element than a useful handle. This had now become indigenous to Egypt. The handles were no longer needed to strap the jars on pack animals. This style dates to 3100 BC, a time in which Egypt was beginning the process of unification.
(RC 182; Naqada III; ceramic; h: 30 cm)



Jar
The handle in the final stage of the sequence is now but a scratch in the clay of the jar under the rim, which was accentuated to hold a cover. These jars were used for the storage of grain or dry goods. Egypt was by the time of this jar's manufacture, 3000 BC, a united nation from north to south.
(RC 1220; Dynasty 1; ceramic; h: 27 cm)

Calcite Container
Fine stonework was the hallmark of the wealthy class during the Early Dynastic Period. The royal workshops produced this fine art as gifts from the king to his relatives and friends, thus leading to the *htp-di-nisw* formula, or "a gift given by the king," used for all funerary goods throughout pharaonic Egypt.
(RC 137; Dynasty 1; calcite; diam: 20 cm)





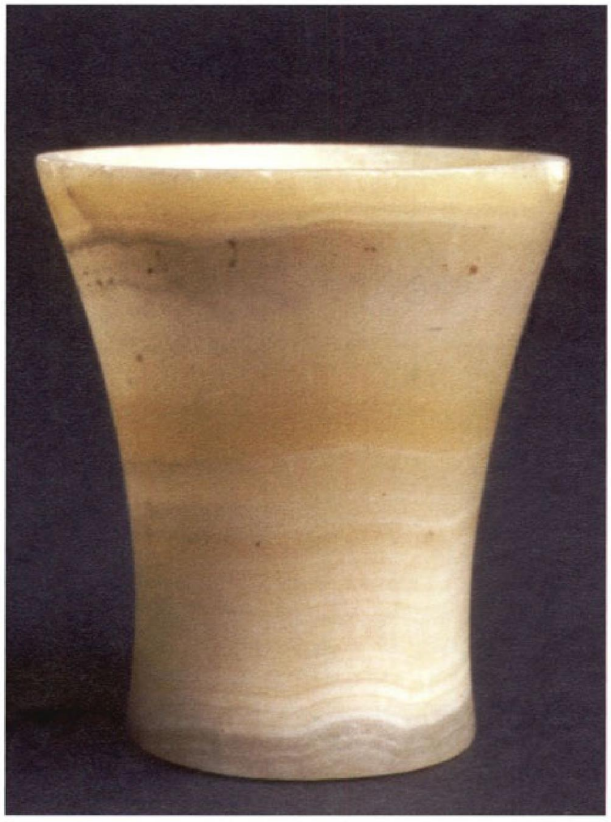
Wine Jar
Wine was a luxury good that was the monopoly of the royal house. A house with such a wine jar obtained it as a gift from the king, thus demonstrating a close contact with the government. Wine was never as common as beer for the ancient Egyptians, but was sought after and listed as a tomb offering. This wine jar was found in a grave.
(RC 825; Dynasty 2; ceramic; h: 53 cm)



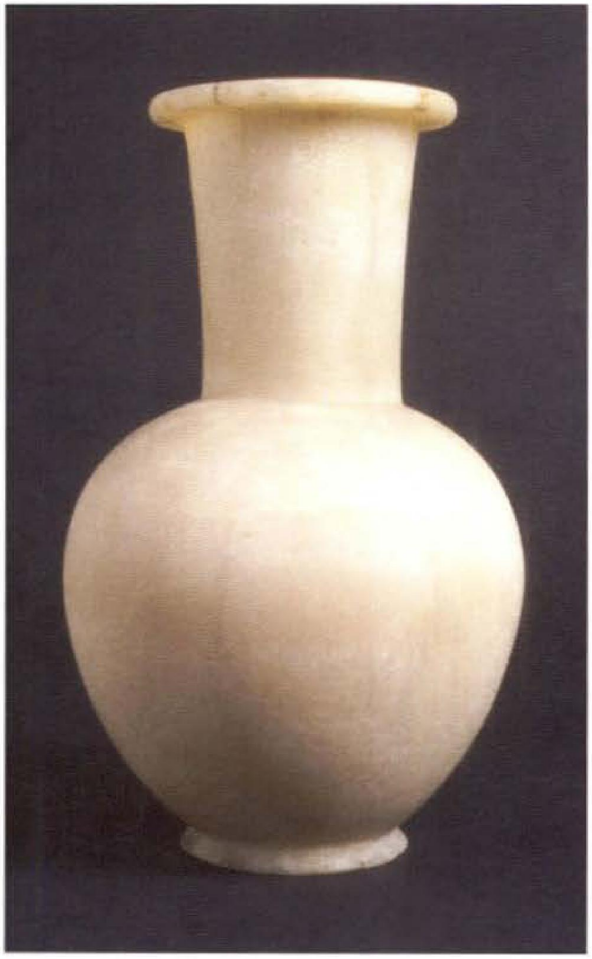
Green Stone Bowl
This fine example of stoneware probably came from a royal workshop. At this time, the power and wealth was centered in the royal house. Only government officials could afford to have such items made by artisans. The common people made do with ceramic vessels they could produce in their own villages.
(RC 1594; Dynasty 2; green schist; 8x20 cm)



Myrrh Jar
This tall calcite vessel commonly held myrrh, an aromatic incense. In a time when most people were illiterate, the shape of vessels identified the contents without having to read a label. Myrrh was an imported and very valuable substance in ancient Egypt, and used not only for perfume, but for incense in the temples.
(RC 1084; Dynasty 4; calcite; h: 7 cm)



Calcite Vessel
Egyptian calcite, more commonly known as alabaster, was one of the favorite materials of Egyptian artists. A hard stone, calcite was often the material used to make a gift from the royal workshops.
(RC 2227; Dynasty 4; calcite; h: 9 cm)

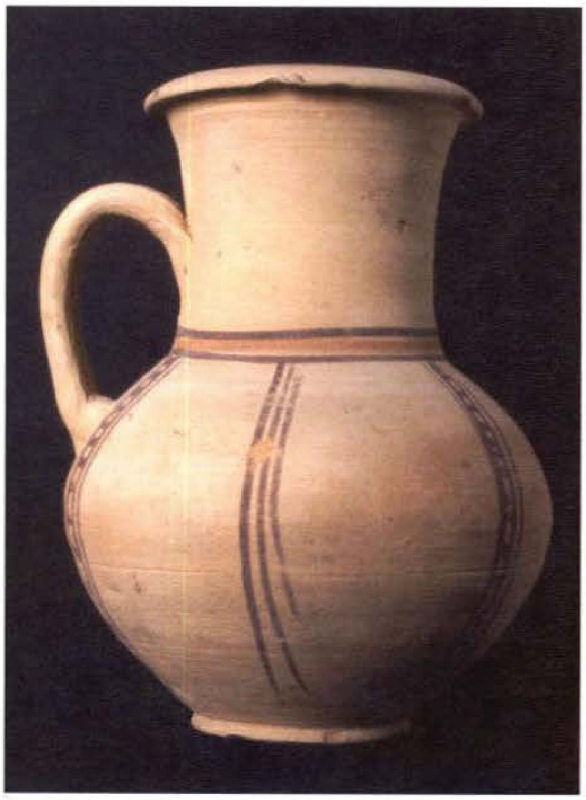


Vase
The shape and design on this jar dates it from the New Kingdom. This jar would have been the prized possession of a household of 3,000 years ago, and it may have constituted an heirloom passed down among the members of the family, until someone finally had the honor of taking it to the tomb.
(RC 810; Dynasty 18; ceramic; h: 15 cm)

Polychrome New Kingdom Jug
The bichrome designs on the sides of this jar are the schematized descendants of the flowered designs of the Second Intermediate Period. The Egyptian people had a talent for taking design elements of other people around them and converting them to their own style.
(RC 202; Dynasty 18; ceramic; h: 23 cm)

Cosmetic Spoon
The bowl of this spoon, meant to hold cosmetics for application, is in the shape of a clam shell. The goddess Hathor was the goddess of personal adornment, and she was associated with the sea. The shell is held by a carved hand at the base of the handle, while the far end is in the shape of a goose head, a symbol of the god Amun, the father of Hathor.
(RC 2061; New Kingdom; calcite; l: 9 cm)







Palettes
The cosmetics of ancient Egypt were ground on slate palettes from their original mineral elements. The rock-like raw cosmetics were ground with a small stone against the smooth surface of the palette. In the Predynastic Period, palettes became a luxury item symbolizing status.
(RC 1234, 1236; Predynastic; slate; up to 9 cm)



Fish Palette
The Nile perch was a favorite motif of the early craftsmen who made palettes. One of the favorite foods of the ancient Egyptians, the perch also represented the god Hat-Mehit.
(RC 1750; Predynastic; slate; 18x31 cm)

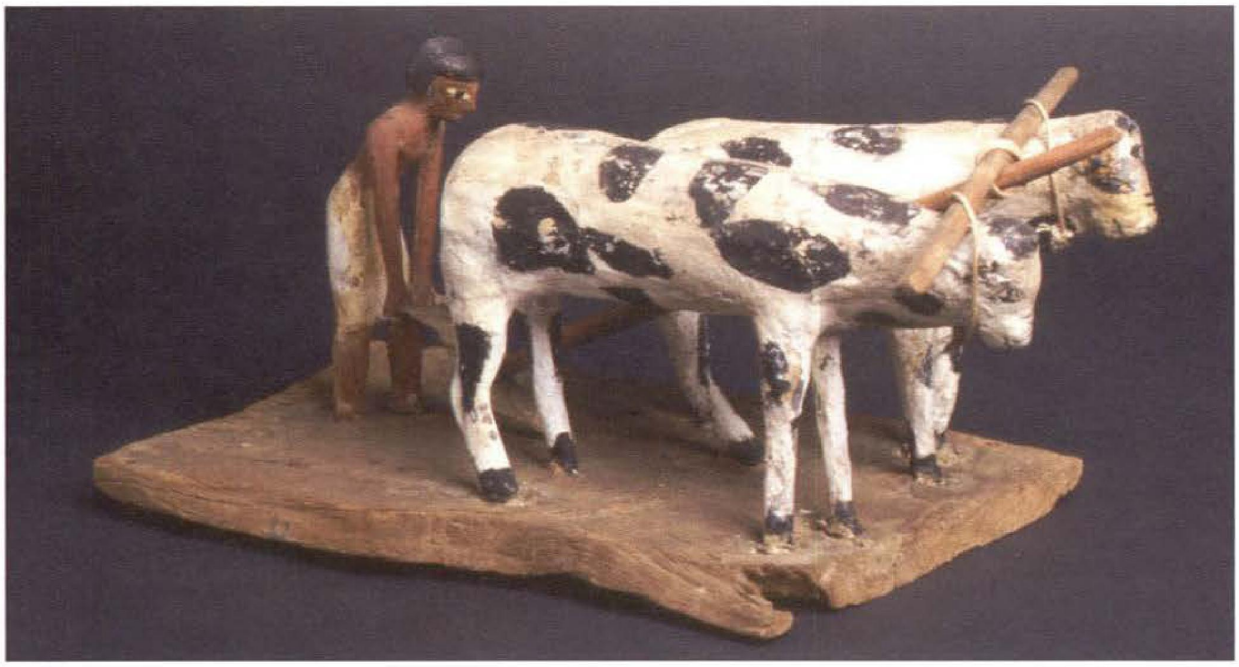


Swimming Cattle Relief
Images of swimming cattle were common in tombs of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties. This example dates from the First Intermediate Period and possibly comes from the cemetery at Herakleopolis, the capital of the 20th Upper Egyptian Nome (one of the regions into which the nation was divided). Cattle were a sign of wealth in ancient Egypt, as they currently are in much of Africa.
(RC 1724; First Intermediate Period; 10x9 cm)



Hoe Heads
Farm tools were often made of metal, a very valuable commodity in ancient Egypt. Hoes such as these were used until they were dull, after which they were sharpened. Once they were too dull and short from frequent sharpening, they would have been melted down to make new tools.
(RC 1065, 357; New Kingdom-Late Period; bronze; h: 10-20 cm)

Plowing Man with Cattle
Cattle were useful not only for meat, but as draft animals. The Egyptians did not have horses until the New Kingdom, and they were used for war, not drafting. Farming was the primary occupation of the ancient Egyptian population. These small-scale grave goods were gradually collected over the owner's lifetime. Some show signs of having been played with by the children of the home.
(RC 1810; Dynasty 12; wood and paint; 19x29 cm)





Round Axes
The axe's round headed shape, rather inefficient as a weapon of war, was characteristic of the Middle Kingdom. During this period of relative peace for Egypt, there were no standing armies, but corvée labor led to the draft when necessary. Expeditions that resulted in skirmishes were played up as war.
(RC 475, 1066, 1576; Middle Kingdom; bronze; w: 15 cm)



Chains
These chains demonstrate the fine craftsmanship of ancient Egyptian metalworkers.
(RC 1625, 1751; Ptolemaic, Middle Kingdom: bronze; l: up to 30 cm)



Long Axes
These axe heads were used in warfare by the ancient Egyptians. Until the New Kingdom, the Egyptians had no standing army; soldiers were drafted when needed. These axes were roughly based on the axes of the Hyksos, the foreign conquerors of Egypt in the Second Intermediate Period.
(RC 1068, 1059, 1060; New Kingdom; bronze; up to 13 cm)



Harpoon
While Egyptians were not true seafarers, preferring to hug the coastlines, they were experienced rivermen. Fishermen often hunted large fish in the Nile using harpoons such as this.
(RC 1073; Coptic; iron; h: 20 cm)



Fishhook
The life of a fisherman was often satirized by the scribes of ancient Egypt, but no occupation provided more protein to the populace of this desert land. Cattle were a luxury food for the rich and for holidays, but fish was always available to all.
(RC 1071; Roman; bronze; 22x4 cm)



Boat with Oarsmen
The primary method of travel in ancient Egypt was the Nile River. Soldiers were transported from place to place on boats. This boat from Meir was found in a tomb and shows the life of the tomb owner's soldiers.
(RC 484; Dynasty 11; wood and paint; 42x96 cm)



Ptolemaic Surgical Set
The medical skills of the ancient Egyptians were famous throughout the ancient world. The Greeks were particularly impressed and interested. This set of physician's tools was made during the period that the Greeks ruled Egypt.
(RC 2191-2195; Ptolemaic Period; bronze; up to 10 cm)



Spear Tip and Arrows ▶
The life of a soldier was difficult and dangerous. As always in warfare, the soldier whose position was the farthest from his enemy stood the best chance of survival, which no doubt made the skill of archery an ideal choice.
(RC 114, 2742, 2743, 675; New Kingdom; bronze; h: 38 cm)

Roman Scale ▼
Egyptians worked with standardized weights and measures throughout their history, and there were severe punishments for cheating on measurements in the market. The Romans took enforcement to a new level, as can be seen by this scale, which would be recognized as such in any market today.
(RC 1626; Greco-Roman; bronze; l: 32 cm)





Dice
Games of chance were popular in ancient Egypt. The crystal astragalus, shaped like a pig's ankle bone (top), is the ancestor of the die which has changed little in the 2,000 years since its introduction to gaming.
(RC 1255, 1253; New Kingdom, Coptic Period; crystal, ivory [below]; 2 cm)

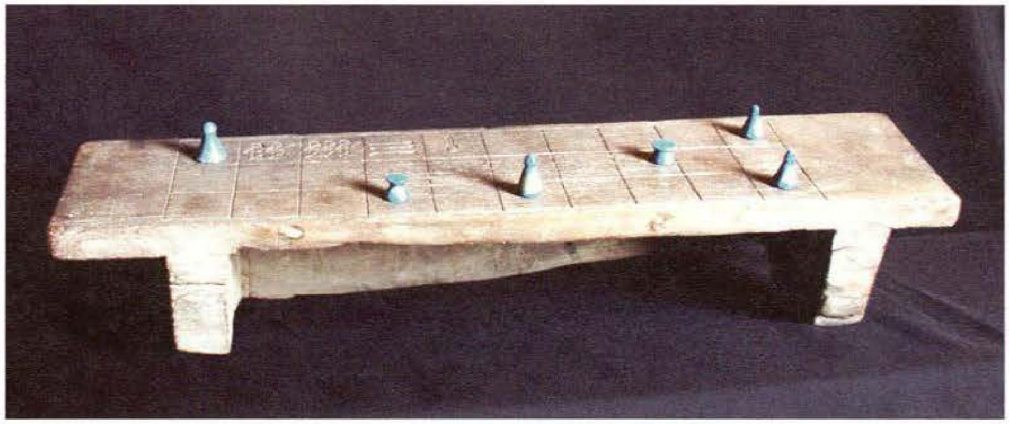
Bell and Flute
Music was deeply enjoyed by ancient Egyptians and was integrated into their lives. The flute was introduced by the Ptolemies, while bells came to Egypt even later.
(RC 1070, 1686; Ptolemaic Period; bronze; l: 25 cm)





Lamps
Candles were unknown in Egypt, and all lighting was accomplished with torches or lamps such as these. Light was very important in the ancient world, and lamps were often decorated with either magical or powerful symbols, such as gods or saints.
(RC 1969, 2419, 2437; Ptolemaic-Coptic; ceramic; l: up to 7 cm)

Senet Board
Senet was a game that the ancient Egyptians played in the home, at work, and in religious contexts. A senet board was even scratched into the floor of the temple of Medinet Habu, perhaps by bored night guards. This fine board was carved from cedar, a valuable imported wood.
(RC 1261; Dynasty 18; wood; l: 53.3 cm)





Pillows
Elaborate hairstyles necessitated the means of protection for the expensive confections, and the pillows of ancient Egypt answered the call. The hard platform kept the wigs and braiding from being damaged during sleep, and they were remarkably comfortable as long as one did not roll over in sleep.
(RC 1814, 1239, 1612; Middle Kingdom, Old Kingdom, New Kingdom; cedarwood; 17x21 cm)

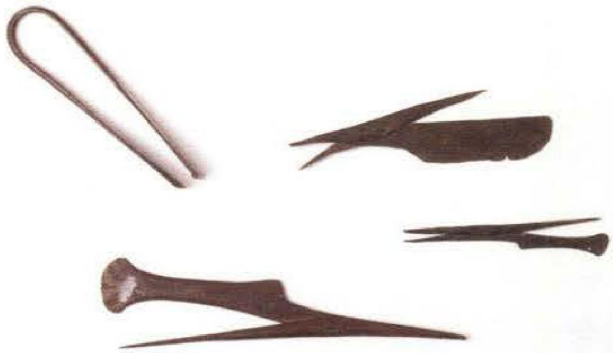
Washing Set
Ritual washing was an intrinsic part of worship in ancient Egypt, and cleanliness was considered important in home life as well. This full washing set includes a ewer, a basin, and offering stands, ready to be anointed with water.
(RC 2979; Dynasty 4; copper; up to 30 cm)





Mirror
When polished to shiny perfection, ancient Egyptian mirrors gave a truer "face" than modern mirrors. A reflection was a very powerful thing to people of the ancient world, and mirrors were used in religious and magical rituals.
(RC 16; New Kingdom; bronze; l: 20.2 cm)

Tweezers
Tweezers were essential in the cosmetic toilet of the Egyptians, as they did not like untidiness of any kind and did not allow unwanted hair to grow. These tweezers are very convenient, as they include a razor and a sharp point for detail work.
(RC 2152, 1237, 1513, 2151; Dynasty 26, Ptolemaic Period; bronze; l: up to 7 cm)





Razors
Egyptians were a fastidiously clean people who shaved all their hair when they deemed it necessary. This could be because of an infestation of lice, but usually was ritualistic in nature. Priests and priestesses were required to be ritually pure, which included complete removal of body hair.
(RC 1550, 354; Dynasty 18, Dynasty 26; bronze; l: 23 cm)



Bracelets
Some of the most ancient artifacts in our collection, these bracelets of shell are at least 6,000 years old and came from the burial of a Predynastic woman.
(RC 2617, 1119, 1123, 1120; Predynastic; shell, ivory; diam: up to 8.5 cm)



Cosmetic Spoon Held by a Girl
This spoon was used to hold cosmetics for mixing in a bowl. The style of carving on the young girl who holds the bowl displays the fluidity of form typical of the Amarna Period. The use of the adolescent girl motif may be an oblique reference to Hathor, the goddess of sexual beauty.
(RC 1682; Dynasty 18-Amarna Period; wood and pigment; h: 21.9 cm)



Wedjat Eye Ring
The eye of Horus was powerful magic and protection against chaos, which might be seen as evil. This ring was worn as a protection against the god Seth, uncle of Horus and god of chaos.
(RC 289; New Kingdom; faience; l: 2.7 cm)



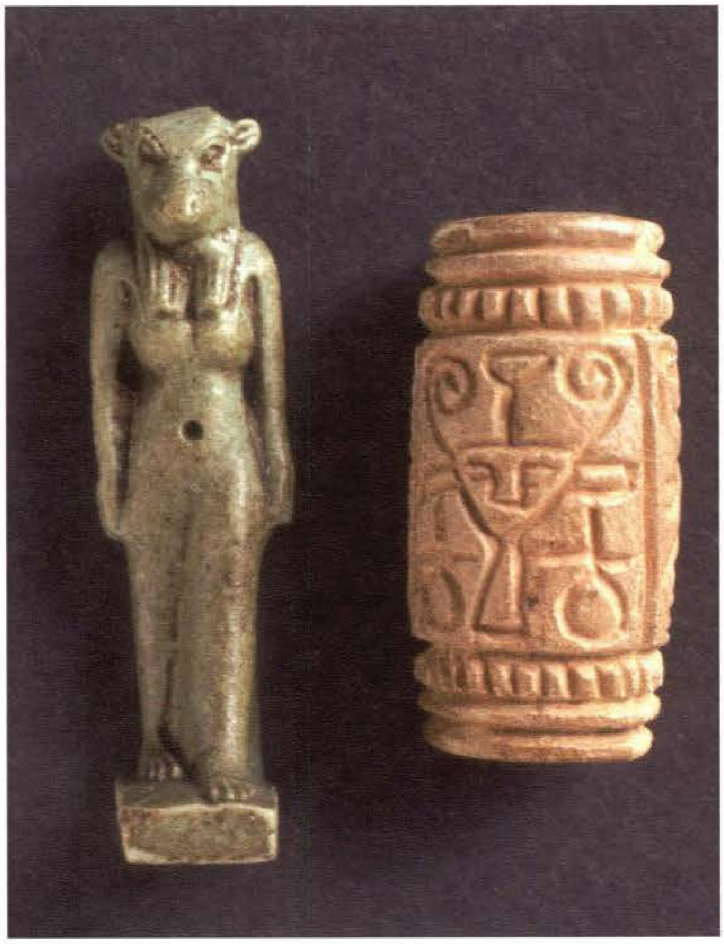
Small Sekhmet
This small but lovingly detailed image of the goddess Sekhmet includes an inscription on the back plinth, identifying her as the beloved of Ptah and healer. This image was created to serve as a votive or an image for a household altar.
(RC 112; Late Period; faience; h: 8.8 cm)



Heqet Amulets
The goddess Heqat was the patroness of magic and was personified by a frog. Frogs were also considered very lucky and a sign of prosperity, perhaps due to the number of frogs in the Nile Delta.
(RC 1108, 57; New Kingdom; steatite; up to 3 cm)



Bes Amulets
Bes was the god of the helpless. Mothers looked to him to protect their children when they could not. He was painted on walls and beds, but most children wore Bes as an amulet, as seen here.
(RC 637, 5188, 1426; New Kingdom-Late Period; faience; up to 6 cm)



Hathor Amulets
All women were under the protection of Hathor, the goddess of love and sexual beauty in ancient Egypt. These amulets display both a "realistic" version of Hathor, as well as a schematized version on the cylinder seal.
(RC 64, 1109; Second Intermediate Period-New Kingdom; faience; up to 5 cm)



Spinning Bowl and Spindles
Spinning was women's work in pharaonic Egypt, and these were the tools they used. Excavated from a household's courtyard in Amarna, these tools, while simple, provided economic prosperity and honor to the owner's home.
(RC 449, 419, 420, 421; Dynasty 18; limestone, wood; diam: 30 cm)



Bes Jars
Bes jars such as these were believed to magically transform the liquid contained within to medicine, thus protecting or healing the person drinking from them.
(RC 2220, 216, 217, 1704; New Kingdom-Roman Period; ceramic, Egyptian Blue; up to 20 cm)



Scribe Set
Scribes were highly honored in Egyptian society, and these were the tools of their trade. Whether a small-town scribe or a worker at the royal treasury, a scribe was a leading member of society, and the possession and knowledge of how these tools were used ensured a livelihood.
(RC 467, 1232, 261, 2020, 1509; New Kingdom; various materials; l: up to 24 cm)



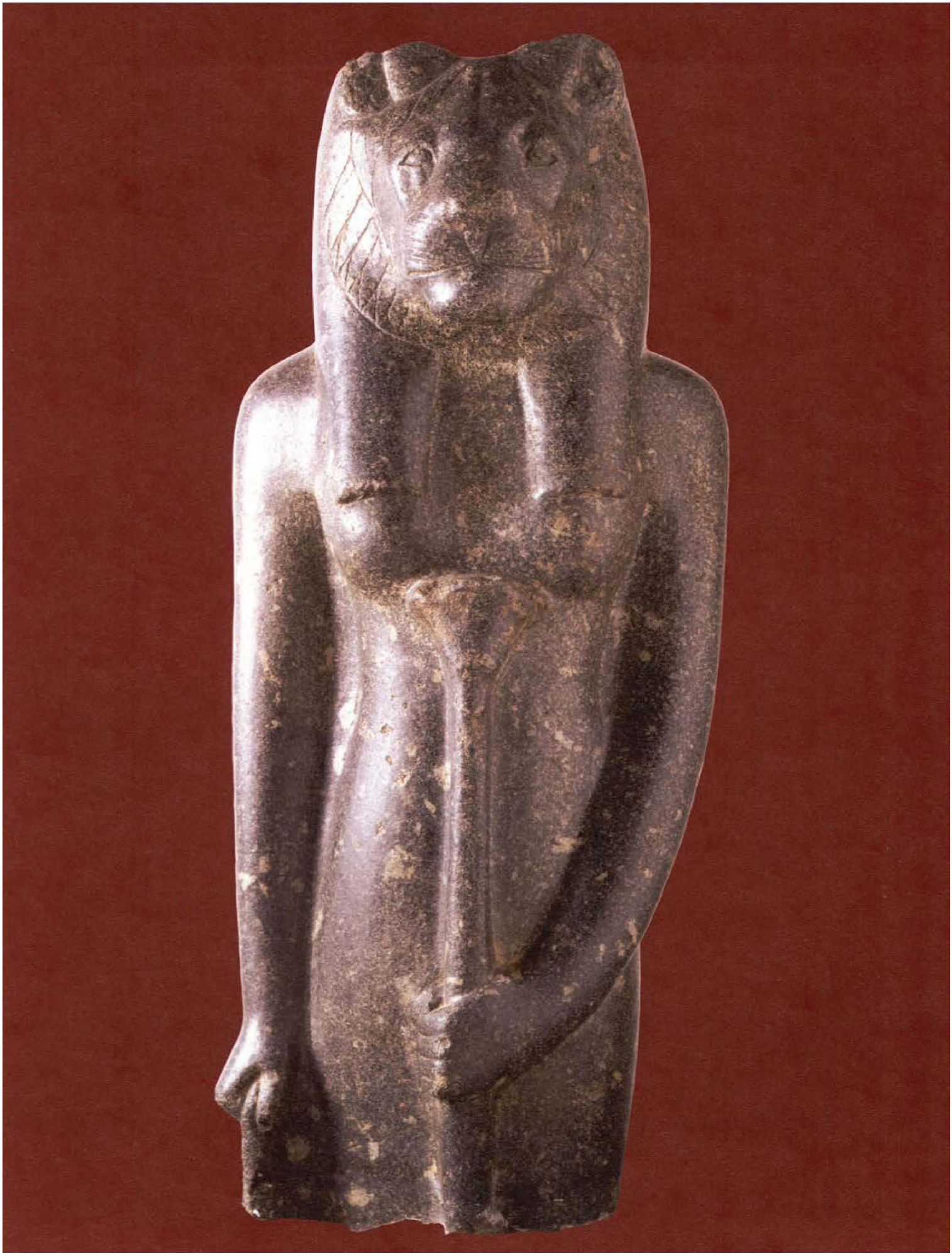
Ostraca
Papyrus was expensive, so a cheap alternative was found for unimportant documents: ostraca. Broken pieces of pottery were ideal for jotting down a note or making a rough draft. If important enough, the information could then be transferred, error-free, to papyrus.
(RC 588, 594, 1232, 467; Middle Kingdom-Late Period; ceramic, cedarwood, blue anhydrite; l: up to 18 cm)

(front view)

(back view)



Fertility Figure
The high mortality rate in ancient Egypt made fertility all the more important. This lady depicts the successful result of fertility; her attire is that of a woman who has successfully given birth.
(RC 256; Second Intermediate Period; ceramic; h: 16 cm)



RELIGION

"The Peak strikes with the stroke of a savage lion, she is after him who offends her! I called upon my Mistress, I found her coming to me as a sweet breeze; she was merciful to me, having made me see her hand."

—Stele of the workman Neferabu from Deir el-Medina to the Goddess of the Mountain, Meretseger.[1]

The core value of ancient Egyptian society may well have been that of *ma'at*, a religious concept, but also one of lifestyle. The concept of ma'at, balance or justice, permeated all aspects of Egyptian society, from daily life to religion.

Religion in ancient Egypt was not compartmentalized into brief intervals of one's life, but was rather seen as a complete way of life. From the home's religious activity to the large-scale ritual of the temple, there was no separating religion from life. It was the interwoven aspects of religion, government, and daily life that together combined to create the rich depth of Egyptian culture.

As Pharaonic Egypt existed for thousands of years, it is impossible to make generalizations about religious beliefs at all times. Primary gods and goddesses could change, depending on the personal gods of the royal dynasty in power. But one constant was the relationship between the king and the gods. The king was called the "Living Horus," after the falcon-headed solar god who was the son of Isis and Osiris. The dead king was called the Osiris, after the god who was raised from the dead by Isis and became Lord of the Afterlife. Therefore, there was always a living example of the god Horus on the throne, and the cycle was completed by the Osiris in the Afterlife. The name *Isis* was written in hieroglyphs with the Egyptian word for "throne." Images of the god Horus sitting on the lap of his mother, Isis, were not only allegorical for "motherhood," but also a visual word play referring to the king on the throne. Words were considered powerful in Egypt, and the play of words was considered sacred, as the written word itself was sacred.[2]

The earliest written words in Egypt are on offering stones to the goddess Hathor, dating prior to 3200 BC. "The Golden One appears in Glory" is the closest translation of these offering stones, left in the burials of ostriches, associated with Hathor for thousands of years.[3] The written language of Egypt appeared rather suddenly and in a very complete form, and it is certainly no coincidence that writing appeared in a religious context. Words were intrinsically

◀ **Standing Sekhmet**
Pharaoh Amenhotep III ordered that up to 730 images of the goddess Sekhmet be created and installed in his mortuary temple to beseech her healing help for his illnesses. The images were later moved to Karnak, and this is presumed to be one of them. In her right hand Sekhmet holds an ankh; in the left, a lotus.
(RC 1605; Dynasty 18-presumably from Thebes; diorite; h: 81 cm)

powerful in the belief system of ancient Egypt. Both the spoken and written word were thought to create a reality through their power. Eventually known as *hieroglyphs*, or sacred symbols, to the Greeks, the written language was used for formal documents and ritual. Only events considered important enough to require permanence were recorded in the formal language. This would include funerary materials such as false doors and coffins, religious documents, formal governmental inscriptions, and ritual items. Not only were the first words in the ancient Egyptian language written for religious purposes, but the final examples of hieroglyphs ever written, in AD 394, were found in the temple of Isis at Philae.[4]

The temple was the center of a great deal of activity in each town or city. Many priests worked at temples on a temporary and rotating basis, putting in their time throughout the year. Average people donated goods and services to temples. The temples themselves were imposing structures, surrounded by walls and fronted by imposing pylons that framed the temple's access point. Most people of ancient Egypt could not enter the interiors of temples, but the priests of varying rank had access according to their level of initiation.

The profession of priest was one of the oldest in Egypt and was not limited to the men of Egypt. Women also took on the work of the worship of the gods, first as priestesses and later as musicians and dancers in the temples, activities that were required to pacify the gods during the dangerous time of contact between human and divine.[5] As with other professions in ancient Egypt, the work of the priesthood was hereditary and considered to be quite honorable, not to mention lucrative.[6] The basic title of a priest was *hm ntr*, or god's slave, although the increasing complexity of temples led to endless variations and specialization of the titles.

Priests were expected to serve gods in various ways, from acting as scribes to presenting offerings to cult images. The priests and personnel of the temples also served in the very practical activities involved in the running of religious estates. Kings and commoners alike donated vast quantities of resources to temples, including entire estates of land, prisoners of war, and herds of cattle. These holdings required large-scale management and bureaucracy, which the priests provided. These vast economic engines provided an impetus to the economy of Egypt, and many people depended on the resources and work provided by the temples. In a society that prized stability, the wealth of temples provided a necessary focus for the active redistribution of the resources of the Egyptian economy.[7]

For those who did not have direct access to temple interiors and cult figures, many options for contact with the deities existed. Perhaps the method most well represented in the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum is the "votive object," an offering meant to remind the gods of the donor's piety. The most common form these objects take is the Late Period bronze votive figure. Either commissioned or purchased pre-made by the penitent, the figures are usually in the

form of the god or goddess that was the desired focus of one's piety. The votive was delivered to the temple and given to a person who had access to the interior, where the votives were placed. These figures could take the part of the penitent in temple activity. These figures appear to have remained in place for some time, as caches of "old" ones have been found dating to several hundred years after their manufacture.[8]

Another form of votive was the animal mummy, very common in Lower Egypt and particularly around the area of Saqqara. Most of the ancient Egyptian gods were associated with a form of animal. Penitents would either donate the mummy of an animal or give the funds to pay for a mummification of the animal to be donated. These animals were sacrificed for this purpose, although it is possible that some mature pets were mummified after their deaths for donation. The business of votive animal mummies became so lucrative that many temples actually maintained farms for the purpose of producing animals to be mummified. Eventually so many people could afford to purchase mummified votives that the temples did not have enough animals to fulfill the demand and began to break apart the animals. This could result in only a few bones being placed inside the "mummy" or even false votives built around jars. It is likely that the donors were unaware of this, as the reforming priest Hor of the Saite Period protested that there should be "one god in one vessel" to avoid defrauding donors.[9]

The religious activities of temples also provided the population with food. Most of the people had little access to beef and high-protein foods, relying instead on the Egyptian staples of barley bread, beer, and onions, perhaps supplemented with fish, for their diet. In large-scale festivals, the temples would sacrifice large numbers of animals, such as cattle, and distribute the resulting food among the attendees. The people of Egypt therefore had access to the very items they donated to the temples.

Temples were not, however, simply economic machines. They fulfilled the needs of the ancient Egyptian religion. Large temple complexes existed for the worship of the state gods of Egypt, a god or goddess for each nome, totaling forty-two. These were not, however, the only focus of religion for the Egyptians. Many towns had one or more patron gods or goddesses, some very obscure and local. For example, the people of the town known today as Deir el-Medina honored a local mountain they called *Meretseger*, or "She Who Loves Silence." The town temple to these deities might actually take the form of a temple or even a simple altar or place in which offerings were left. Sometimes, people were deified after their death and honored in ways very much like the gods, such as Queen Ahmose-Nefertari or Amenhotep, son of Hapu.[10]

The most basic of the religious activities among the ancient Egyptians was honoring of family ancestors. The household itself was responsible for the well-being of the deceased members of the family through offerings and even simple remembrance of them. It appears that the relationship was considered to

be a mutual one, as "letters to the dead" assert that the dead had a great deal of control over their descendants' lives from the next world. For the immediate well-being of a household, it could well be that honoring ancestors was more of a daily factor than formally organized religious activities and beliefs.

Formal religion in Egypt was meant to explain the origins of the world and the basis of Egyptian civilization. Egypt was a large nation, however, so there was not always one single story that explained everything. It seems that the Egyptians were very inclusive in their religious beliefs and would include several stories of creation, even in the same tomb. Gods and the stories about them upheld the concept of ma'at as a basic founding principle. Gods were arranged in family groups, emphasizing the importance of the filial bond. The king, as a relative of the gods, was responsible for serving them, just as the people of Egypt served their own ancestors.

In this manner, the highest level of Egyptian society mirrored the lowest level of Egyptian society. Ma'at was a universal concept, and people supported ma'at in their own way and in the manner appropriate to their status. And in this way, all members of the society bore the same responsibility for the stability of the world in which they lived.

"Hail to you, Hapi, sprung from the earth, come to nourish Egypt! Of secret ways, of darkness by day, to whom his followers sing!"

Hymn to the god Hapi, c. 2000 BC[11]

PRAYER TO THOTH

O Thoth, convey me to Khnum,
Your town where life is pleasing;
Supply my needs of bread and beer,
And guard my mouth (in) speaking!
If only I had Thoth behind me tomorrow,
"Come!" They would say;
I enter in before the lords,
I leave as one who is justified.
You great dum-palm of sixty cubits,
On which there are nuts;
There are kernels in the nuts,
There is water in the kernels.
You who bring water (from) afar,
Come, rescue me, the silent;
O Thoth, you well that is sweet
To a man who thirsts in the desert!
It is sealed to him who finds words.
It is open to the silent;
Comes the silent, he finds the well,
(To) the heated man you are [hidden].[12]

—A New Kingdom prayer



Musical Materials
These materials were all associated with women and their activities in the temples of Egypt. The stone relief (right) originally decorated a tomb wall at the necropolis of Saqqara and shows a woman as she chose to be depicted, sistrum in hand, honoring her gods. The small face of Hathor (center) was the decoration of a sistrum handle. The bronze sistrum (left) is a testament in itself to the durability of Egyptian culture: it dates from the Roman era and was made outside of Egypt.
(RC 1765, 2245, 636; Dynasty 18-Roman; bronze, limestone, faience; 2-20 cm)



Striding Priest
This small image of a priest depicts him in the traditional pose of humble homage before divinity, with hand over heart. The menat necklaces around his neck point to an allegiance to the goddess Hathor.
(RC 1829; Saite Period; greywacke; h: 25 cm)



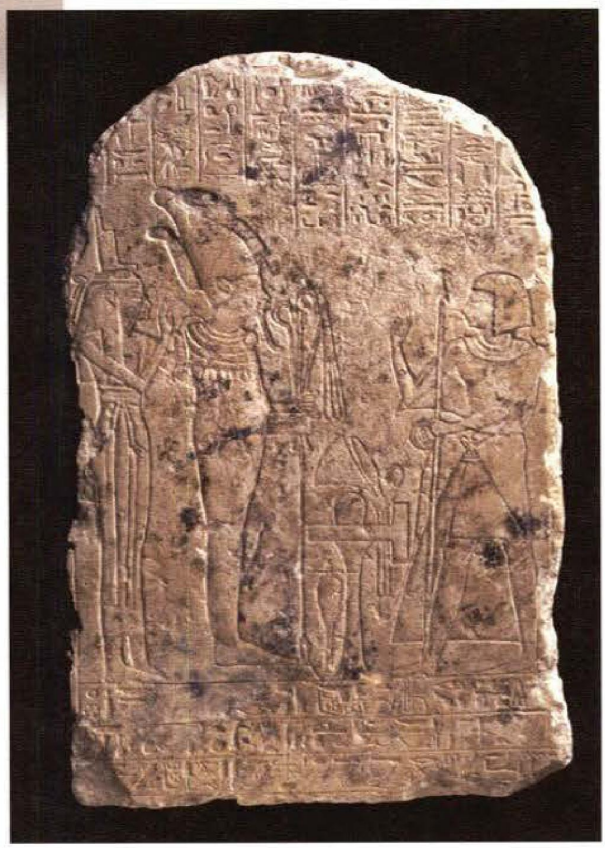
Priest of Amun
This large image of a priest proudly notes his title: "The priest of Amun at Karnak who was in charge of the barque User-Hat of Amun, Overseer of the Secrets and Purifier of the God." The inscription exhorts the passing priests to speak the name of this priest, and in spite of the break across it, it is clear his name was Pekher-Khonsu.
(RC 1583; Ptolemaic; diorite; h: 48 cm)



Kneeling Hapi
Small bronzes such as these were donated to the temple in honor of the object's sponsor. The entrances to the temples were filled with these objects, in the hope that the passing priests and the gods themselves would remember the individual donor.
(RC 2038; Ptolemaic; bronze; h: 10 cm)



Pilgrim Flask
Rounded pilgrim flasks of this type were carried by religious travelers as they visited temples along their route. The blue color of this flask is very much associated with the Eighteenth Dynasty, and this may date to the time of Akhenaten, being carried by a pilgrim to the temple of the Aten.
(RC 1812; New Kingdom; faience; h: 10 cm)



Relief of a Policeman
This public donation stele was commissioned by Heri-Hor, the chief of police of the port of Abydos. As a pilgrimage town, Abydos was no doubt a busy place, full of the religious, the shops to support them, and the thieves who have always preyed on the pious. A stele of this sort was meant for the temple.
(RC 1631; Dynasty 18; limestone; 42x26 cm)



Bes Staff Finial
A priest carried a wand or a staff with protective images on it. This staff finial represents the god Bes, and it may have been carried by a healer or perhaps a priest in one of the dream temples. As he was the protector of those who were sleeping, a Bes staff would have been reassuring to patients suffering from uninterpreted nightmares.
(RC 1651; Late Period; bronze; 13x2 cm)

Incense Offering Burner
This wand was used to offer incense for censing the god. An incense bead was held in the cartouche-shaped cup before the kneeling king, and a metal cup (now missing) rested on the hand and held charcoal. The offering priest or king picked up the incense with tweezers and dropped it into the burning charcoal, resulting in a puff of smoke.
(RC 2081; Late Period; bronze; l: 55 cm)



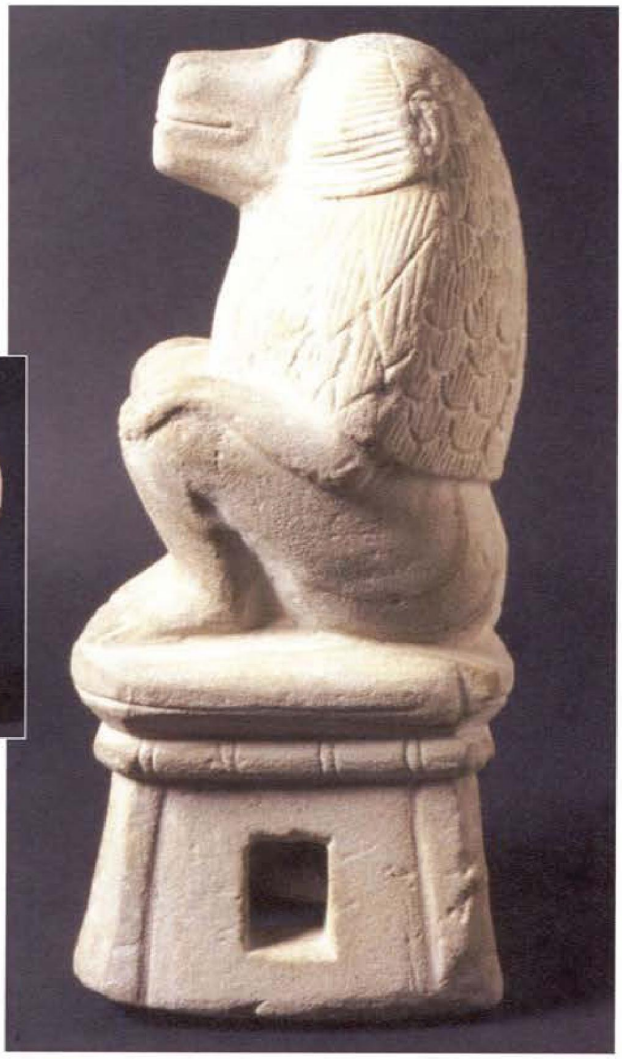


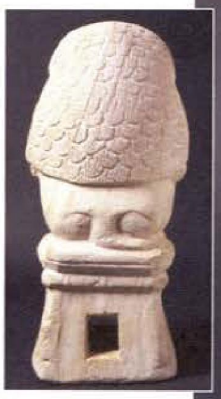
Neith
Although missing her arms, which were made separately, this is one of the finest representations of the goddess. The shape of her body and the smile on her face betray her date as Saite Period. As she was the Lady of Sais, the Saite dynasty venerated Neith, who began her existence as a war goddess and whose fetish was a shield with crossed arrows.
(RC 1806; Saite Period; wood, some pigment; h: 47 cm)



Face of Bes
This Bes was the base for a larger object, now lost. Of the finest workmanship, the eyes were inlaid with precious stones, gouged out by thieves. In spite of the damage, the fierce and protective face of Bes is still clear.
(RC 2220; Ptolemaic Period, Egyptian Blue; 8x9 cm)

Thoth
The sandstone seated baboon represented the god Thoth, called Djehuti by the Egyptians. Seated like a scribe for whom he was the patron, this respectful yet humorous figure betrays the Egyptians' love of animals and their artistic talent. The base may have been used to disperse incense, making this figure a practical temple tool.
(RC 1945; Saite Period; sandstone; 45x16 cm)





Predynastic Hippopotami
Images of the gods date back to the formative years of ancient Egypt. These hippopotami are over 6,000 years old. While they were gods to be honored, they were dangerous as well, as shown by the scratches and cut marks over the images. They were ritually killed, and never provided with legs.
(RC 1696, 1697; Predynastic Period; limestone; 6x9 cm)





Baboon
Images and mummies of Djehuti were donated to the temples to honor the animal representing the god. This figure is an anomaly; there is no baboon in this mummy. An x-ray has revealed that this image is formed around an ancient ceramic jar. To the Egyptians, image was everything. Since this looked like a baboon, it was as good as a baboon.
(RC 2213; Late Period-Victorian Era?; linen, ceramic, wood; 52x25 cm)

Cat Mummies and Coffin
Cats represented the goddess Bastet, playful protectress of the home. These mummified cats were placed in the temple galleries. The cats are very elaborately wrapped. The coffin is cat-shaped. Just as humans expected an anthropomorphic coffin, the cats received no less. The cat coffin lifts off of the base for the mummy to be inserted.
(RC 390, 608, 739; Late Period-Ptolemaic; wood, cat mummy; h: to 45 cm)





Iron Isis Finial
Staves were often used in temple processions to mark the location of important individuals in the ceremony. Staves were also the "flags" of ancient Egypt, and could note the place of origin of an individual. However, Isis was a state goddess and this finial was likely involved in temple worship.
(RC 2085; Late Period; bronze; 28x21 cm)

Bastet Votive Images
Gifts to temples were of many types and qualities. As the protectress of the home, Bastet was particularly popular. These three images represent different styles: on the left, a fully bronze cat; in the center, the head of a cat from a composite statue; and on the right is a wooden, gilt cat with inlaid realistic eyes.
(RC 1574, 2243, 96; Late Period; bronze, wood; 6-16 cm)





Thoth Votive Mummies
Thoth was the patron of scribes, and the gifts donated to him were often of expensive quality. The two ibis mummies were finely wrapped in the most expensive manner, and the cartonnage coffin in the center was finely gilded for the god.
(RC 225, 1804, 226; Late Period-Ptolemaic; wood, gilt, bronze, mummy; 29-35 cm)



Isis Figure
The iconic image of Madonna and Child originates with Isis seated with Horus on her lap. This image was also the written "description of kingship," as the name *Isis* was the word for throne, and the king was called the "Living Horus." In this object, Horus is missing. Isis was called the Mistress of Magic and was a mother goddess.
(RC 1652; Late Period; bronze; 42x11 cm)



Coffin of a Snake
This small coffin was intended as a votive offering to the temple of the snake goddess Wadjet. Inside, x-rays revealed the mummies of two baby cobras.
(RC 602; Late Period; wood, serpents; 10x17 cm)



Apis Bull
Votive Figure
The Apis Bull was a symbol of the god Ptah. Egypt had only one Apis at a time, and specific criteria had to be met in the search for a new Apis bull. For example, it had to have a white triangle on its forehead, and its tail had to be curly. Upon its death, the king would feast on the meat of the bull.
(RC 5; Late Period; bronze; 12x11x3 cm)



Seated Dog Votive
Egypt had many canine deities, the most famous of which is Anubis, the jackal. The shape of this votive figure shows it to be more dog-like, so this may represent Wepwawet, the Opener of the Ways, who was associated with the wolf.
(RC 2993; Late Period; bronze; 8x5x2 cm)



Wadjet Bronze
This cast bronze figure of a sacred cobra was likely the adornment of a cobra coffin. The horns of Hathor on the cobra's head ably demonstrate the increasing association of the various goddesses with each other's emblems. Wadjet, the cobra goddess, took on the attributes of the solar goddess Sekhmet.
(RC 10; Late Period; bronze; h: 11 cm)



Leonine Goddesses
The goddesses depicted in this image include the flanking images of Sekhmet with the goddess Wadjet seated in the center. The smallest of the images is of faience, while the others are bronze. All serve the same purpose: they are made to give as votive offerings to the goddesses depicted.
(RC 1510, 1601, 1; Late Period-Ptolemaic; bronze, faience; h: 13-30 cm)



Staff Finial
The goddess Sekhmet was honored in this staff finial. A mount in the back provides evidence of the true use of the image.
(RC 119; Late Period, bronze; 8x7 cm)



Imhotep Votive Figure
Like many of the images made of bronze in the Late Period, this image of Imhotep was made to honor a god. In this case, however, the god honored was once a man, the architect of the Step Pyramid of Saqqara. As he was also a physician, doctors especially would place votives at the location believed to be Imhotep's tomb.
(RC 1507; Late Period; bronze; h: 10 cm)



Gecko Coffin
Lizards in ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs were the sign for "many," and so came to symbolize wealth and prosperity. This votive coffin of a lizard contains the small bones of the lizard and was donated in the hope of creating that which was written, wealth, for the donor.
(RC 1694; Late Period; bronze; 1x4 cm)



Theban Triad
A large-scale statue originally held this image protectively in its hand: the Theban divine family, consisting of Amun, Mut, and their son, Khonsu. The image that held this was likely of a priest in the temple of Amun, placed in the temple in the 6th century BC and finally removed around the 3rd century BC.
(RC 1213; Late Period; bronze; 7x4 cm)



Harpocrates
The god Harpocrates eventually became associated with Hermes Trismegistus, or Hermes the Thrice-Great, in Greco-Roman Egypt after the pharaohs. As Hermes Trismegistus, the god flourished and his worship continued for many centuries.
(RC 2; Late Period; bronze; 14x9 cm)



Osiris
The god Osiris was the rival of his brother, Seth, the embodiment of chaos. Killed in one of their battles, Osiris was raised from the dead by his wife Isis. He was thus the hero of all Egyptians, for they wanted to achieve eternal life as well.
(RC 1743, 3; Late Period; bronze; up to 24 cm)

Lepidotus Fish Amulet
One of the fish of the Nile, the lepidotus fish was associated with the goddess Mehit. This amulet was worn to obtain her protection.
(RC 2056; Late Period; bronze; 2x5 cm)





Seated Ptah
This image of the god Ptah was made of serpentine, a very hard semi-precious stone worked by the ancient Egyptians. The eyes of this figure were also inlaid with even more precious stones, no doubt removed at some point for their value.
(RC 70; Late Period; serpentine; 8x4 cm)

Purification Priest Stele
The priest Men-Heper-Re is seen offering incense to the god Amun in this Late Period donation stele.
(RC 1654; Late Period; limestone; 25x29 cm)





Votive Relief
Relief stelae made for donation to the temples became very common by the Ptolemaic Period, demonstrating that more people had access to both luxury items and religious rituals. This simple stele honors Osiris, Isis, and Horus.
(RC 1655; Ptolemaic Period; limestone; 23 cm)



Ptah Votive Figure with Altar
This convenient little image of the god Ptah includes its own altar, upon which water could be poured to "activate" it in the magical sense. Ptah was the husband of Sekhmet, and as such was believed to have great influence in focusing her healing capabilities.
(RC 109; Late Period; bronze; 10x3 cm)



GOVERNMENT

"Now my heart turns to and fro, in thinking what the people say, those who shall see my monument in after years, and shall speak of what I have done"

—Queen Hatshepsut quoted on her obelisk at Karnak.[1]

Who was a king in ancient Egypt? There is no single answer to this question. The king of Egypt was not always Egyptian and was not always a man. Further complicating matters, the ruler of Egypt was not always a king. The collection of the Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum holds examples of the many possible forms of rule in ancient Egypt, from strictly governmental to religious.

The government of ancient Egypt was closely associated with the religious system. The family unit was the foundation level of government, with the king at the top rung of the system. The king was a considered to be a descendant of the gods and was called the "Living Horus." In this system, without the gods, there could be no royal government. The primary duty of the king was the propagation of *ma'at*, a concept of the Egyptians that is difficult to translate. It is perhaps best defined as balance, although other definitions can include truth and justice.[2]

The most basic level of government in Egypt was the family. Elders of the family, whether male or female, were seen as the arbiters of disputes. The overseers of the work groups often acted in the role of judge for the workmen and families under their supervision.[3] Frequently, disputes were taken to another level, as the Egyptians appear to have been a fairly contentious group of people, in that they would actually litigate their disputes, thus leaving us a record of the activity.[4]

Existing evidence from the town of Deir el-Medina tells us that the people of Egypt could take their disputes to a town magistrate officially appointed by the king, although it is unlikely that the king engaged in that level of micro-management. This magistrate would hold days at court, in which people could take their case before him and expect a ruling. If the ruling was not acceptable to a party, they could appeal the decision to the regional magistrate or the mayor of the largest town nearby. Finally, a case could be taken to the vizier, although the appellant ran the risk of offending that very important person if the case were frivolous, and punishment could result.[5] Nevertheless, in one case, two families were in dispute over a jar of oil for over ten years.[6]

◀ **Cleopatra VII** *(RC 1582).* See page 105.

Scribes made this all possible. Being indispensable tools of the organized state system, the written word was used in every aspect of government, from the recording of property to the dissemination of royal decrees. As the scribes were trained in temples, the crossover between religious and government institutions was imbedded in society. This balance was an aspect of ma'at.

Ma'at, as a concept, was believed to make the river flood each year at the correct time to the proper depth. It kept the people well and healthy, and it ensured an afterlife. The king created ma'at by honoring the gods with offerings such as incense and the proper performance of all rituals.[7] If he failed, as far as the Egyptians were concerned, Egypt would cease to exist. In his role as High Priest of Egypt, the king was responsible for the well-being of the people of Egypt, as if he were the elder in his family.

The earliest kings were more likely warlords in charge of the disparate tribes centered around the towns of Predynastic Egypt. Over 5,000 years ago, the egalitarian society of these towns changed to a status-based system. This may have been the result of contact with Mesopotamia, which had an advanced class system and many useful trade items. Those who could acquire trade items more readily gained status, and the egalitarian system ended. Warfare may have been the result, as some towns[8] came under the control of other towns. Finally, the last division of Egypt was between the north and south, a division that was perpetuated in Egyptian culture forever as Upper and Lower Egypt. Upper Egypt, to the south, took over Lower Egypt, and the "Two Lands" were united under one ruler.

The kingship and rule of Egypt was always a kind of theocracy. Each major town had its own patron god or goddess, which were all thought to be in concord as to who ruled Egypt. The ruler was the relative of the gods and a living god in person. It was believed that no person could become the ruler without the specific desire of the gods being made manifest, so to turn against the king was to deny ma'at and the gods. Absolute power was in the hands of the king during the Old Kingdom, the Pyramid Age, although over the history of Egypt power became increasingly spread among other officials. The funerary cults of the deceased kings were elaborate and well funded, and examples of art from the tombs of those who worked in these systems were created by the best artists.

Kingship and inheritance were often sources of great contention in ancient Egypt. At times, collateral noble houses, cousins of the ruling family, would vie for the right to the throne. Succeeding to the throne was often attempted through marriage, as attested by the "commoner" marriages of the Eighteenth Dynasty, in which several kings were married to girls of a noble family of Akhmim. This family of Akhmim, which included such notables as Queen Tiyi and probably Nefertiti, were the keepers of the cult of Queen Ahmose-Nefertari, a queen from early in the dynasty who was seen as an ancestress.[9] Harem conspiracies

abounded, if one assumes that those we have written record of are but a sampling of the true number of events. The mother whose son achieved the throne was considered a form of living goddess, as she bore the "god." This position was much coveted, and more than one king died as a result of the machinations of his wives.[10]

The contest for the throne itself was not limited to the men of the royal family. From the earliest times, women in the royal family were extremely powerful. Indeed, the Early Dynastic burial with the most attendant burials was that of Queen Mer-Neith. Other women who ruled as "king" included Nitokerty, Sobeknefru, and, of course, Hatshepsut. When there was warfare or a very young heir, women also appear to have managed the affairs of the nation until the owner of the throne returned or came of age.[11]

Other important officials included military officers, treasurers, and certainly the priesthood. The military protected the borders and, of course, extended them from time to time. Treasurers collected taxes and kept the records of the king's treasury. The priesthood, however, stood both in tandem and at odds with the royal house.

Throughout various periods of pharaonic history, the priesthood of Egypt was often powerful, and at times was more powerful than the king himself. In the Old Kingdom, the king was the ruler both of the nation and the religion. As the king's power spread among more officials, the priesthood became more powerful as well as hereditary.[12] Particularly by the time of the New Kingdom, the god Amun of Karnak reigned supreme, and large endowments were given by the kings as they came to the throne. The priesthood of Amun grew increasingly wealthy and powerful, and may well have stood against the royal house.

During the Eighteenth Dynasty, Pharaoh Akhenaten changed the religion to one of monotheism rather than polytheism. This must have rankled the priesthood of Amun and led to a great deal of trouble, as they were now removed from power. Akhenaten's new religion introduced Egyptians to the concept of a sole universal god, the Aten, based on the concept of light, although the Aten was depicted in art as the solar disk. The other forty-two major gods and goddesses of Egypt were considered to be counterfeit and not to be worshiped during this period. Akhenaten transferred the capital to Akhetaten (now called Amarna), a new city built on virgin land in central Egypt.

The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum sponsored excavations at the site of Amarna and, as a result, holds a broadly representative collection of materials from this site.[13] Amarna is particularly useful as a "snapshot" of life in ancient Egypt, and it provides some of the evidence, as well, of the violent reaction against Atenism following the death of Akhenaten. Tutankhamun re-established the former religion of Egypt and rebuilt the temples.[14] The site of Akhetaten was abandoned in the reign of Tutankhamun and never again occupied.

The monarchy of Egypt continued on through various periods of prosperity and decline. The Ramesside Period, so called for the name of many of the kings of this dynasty, lasted long. It was known for the power of Egyptian kingship, for its acquisition of Near Eastern territory, as well as the first recorded labor strike in the history of the world.[15] With the advent of the Third Intermediate Period, this system again collapsed into regionalism.

From this point on, the Temple of Amun at Karnak was used as a unifying force in the nation of Egypt. The nominal kings of the Third Intermediate Period placed their sons in the temple to link the support of the temple with the throne. By the reign of Ramses VI, daughters of the rulers were made the God's Wives of Amun, wielding power for their fathers in the area of Thebes, while the king often lived far away. These God's Wives did not marry or have children; they adopted the daughter of the next ruler in an attempt to prevent the establishment of a contending dynasty in Thebes.[16]

Perhaps the most famous of all rulers of Egypt, though, is Cleopatra. Not of Egyptian descent by blood, but by heart and association, Cleopatra was descended from Greco-Macedonian rulers of Egypt, who achieved rule following the invasion by Alexander the Great. Known as the Ptolemies, this family perhaps provides us with much fuller documentation regarding the machinations involved in achieving the throne. This family was extremely fratricidal, and murder was often the means to achieving the throne.[17]

As the last of her line, Cleopatra contended not only with her own family to ascend the throne, but with the Romans to hold it. Remarkably successful, she used her intelligence and charisma to sway several notable Romans to her side, including Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. In the end, there was no hope for her against the power of Rome, and she was forced to commit suicide. Thus ended the self-rule of Egypt until the middle of the last century.

Every aspect of society in ancient Egypt affected all other aspects, but few as closely as religion and kingship.

The Ruler of Ma'at who came from eternity,

The Son of Re who exalts his beauty,

Who offers him the product of his rays,

The King who lives by Ma'at.

The Lord of the Two Lands, Neferkheprure, Sole-one-of-Re

(And) the great Queen, Nefer-nefru-Aten Nefertiti

—Hymn to the Aten and the King, Eighteenth Dynasty[18]



Relief of a King's Acquaintance
The lady on this relief wears her hair in the Old Kingdom boyish bob style. Although fragmentary, her titles above her include that of *Rht Nisw*, or "one known by the king" as well as priestess of Ma'at. In this early phase of Egyptian eschatology, the king alone was assured of an Afterlife, so any association with him was very important.
(RC 2973; Dynasty 5; limestone; 60x40 cm)

Early Dynastic Coffin ▼
The coffins of the Early Dynastic Period were intended for a contracted burial with the body in a fetal position. This coffin was excavated at Kafr Tarkhan near the Faiyum by Sir W.M.F. Petrie.
(RC 1585; Dynasty 2; wood; 60x89x45 cm)





Tomb Relief of Shedi-Ptah
The priest of this relief was named Shedi-Ptah, also called Shediew. He was Overseer of the Commissions of the pyramid complex of Pepi II, as well as the Overseer of the Royal Treasuries, Inspector of the Chamber of Royal Attire, and Overseer of the Chambers of the Royal Ornament, among other titles. He was buried at Saqqara near the Teti pyramid complex.
(RC 1737; Dynasty 6; limestone; 27x62 cm)



Boat with Shields
Warfare was an unfortunate necessity in the ancient world, and Egypt was not immune. When attacked or robbed of her property, Egypt would either conscript its own citizens or hire mercenaries. Nubian archers in particular, seen on this boat, were famous for their work with Egypt.
(RC 1815; Dynasty 11; wood and pigment; l: 127 cm)



Battle Axe
Middle Kingdom tensions created a market for a new addition to tombs and life, that of the weapon. This battle axe dates to the Middle Kingdom and was used in hand-to-hand combat, as chariots did not yet exist in Egypt.
(RC 1938; Dynasty 12; copper, wood; l: 118 cm)



Sobekhotep Scarab Seal
Sobekhotep was king of Egypt before the collapse into the Second Intermediate Period.
(RC 5187; Second Intermediate Period; faience; 2 cm)



Royal Cylinder Seals
Kings Amenemhat III and Senusret III are represented on these seals.
(RC 1111, 1112; Middle Kingdom; faience; 3 cm, 2 cm)



Hatshepsut Bead
This small Egyptian Blue bead bears the cartouche of the controversial queen-ruler of the Eighteenth Dynasty, Hatshepsut. Declaring herself "king," Hatshepsut ruled Egypt for decades before her death. As the royal name of the ruler was considered a powerful amulet, Ma'at-Ka-Re, her formal name, was etched into this bead.
(RC 1114; Dynasty 18; Egyptian Blue; l: 2 cm)



Votive Stele of Ahmose Nefertari
This early queen of the Eighteenth Dynasty was venerated after her death as a patroness of Egypt and, in particular, of the town of Deir el-Medina, the home of the workmen who made the New Kingdom's royal tombs. This stele, made several centuries after the queen's death, shows her with her son, Ahmose Sapairy.
(RC 1586; Dynasty 20; limestone; 17x12 cm)



Royal Motif Rings
Rings and other amuletic jewelry often included picture plays on the king's name. The larger ring has a visual reference to Amenhotep III's throne name.
(RC 1059; 1057; Dynasty 18; faience; 1-1.5 cm)



Kohl Tube with the Name of Amenhotep III and Queen Tiyi
Kohl tubes held eye cosmetics of the ancient Egyptians. A stick applicator was used to remove and apply the kohl. The amuletic properties of the names of the king and queen were used to decorate this tube in the hopes that the divine protection granted the royal family would apply to the user of this jar.
(RC 1808; Dynasty 18; faience; l: 12 cm)



Ring of Amenhotep III
Amenhotep III, the father of Akhenaten, was a very important king in his own right. The religious reforms professed under Akhenaten were introduced under Amenhotep III.
(RC 1059; Dynasty 18; faience; w: 1 cm)



Ring of Akhenaten
Akhenaten, the controversial religious reforming pharaoh of the Eighteenth Dynasty, changed his official name in the ninth year of his reign so that it did not include the god Horakhty. Since this ring's cartouche includes the name "Beloved of Horakhty," we know that it dates to early in his reign, no later than year nine.
(RC 1637; Dynasty 18; bronze; w: 2 cm)

Akhenaten Offering to the Aten
This polychrome fragment of a column depicts Akhenaten offering incense to his sole god, the Aten, and being blessed by the hieroglyph for "life" in return. The cartouches indicate that this column dates to early in Akhenaten's reign, no later than year nine.
(RC 2070; Dynasty 18; limestone; 23x34 cm)





Ibexes in the Desert
Nature was a vital component of the worship of the Aten during the Amarna Period. Desert ibexes, nearly extinct now, were considered especially blessed due to their almost constant contact with the Aten.
(RC 1734; Dynasty 18; limestone; 15x54 cm)



Offering Altar Fragment
Polychrome paint covered the city of Akhetaten, one of the few known ancient Egyptian cities designed whole and intact on virgin land. This altar fragment was made for offerings and was broken following the collapse of Amarna.
(RC 489; Dynasty 18; limestone; h: 15 cm)



Torso Fragment
Akhenaten is offering to the Aten. A small hand, barely visible around his waist, is the embracing hand of the Aten, reaching down to honor its benefactor.
(RC 1722; Dynasty 18; limestone; 21x19 cm)

Early Relief
Early in his reign, depictions of Akhenaten were very traditional, as in this fragment of a relief scene.
(RC 1720; Dynasty 18; limestone; 29x66 cm)





War Crown Fragment
This large piece of Egyptian Blue was originally intended for inlay in a large-scale relief. It is a fragment of the "Blue Crown," or war crown, of ancient Egyptian pharaohs. This battle helmet was worn only by the king as he drove his chariot into battle.
(RC 2244, Dynasty 18; Egyptian Blue; 12x13 cm)

Offering Girl
The population of Akhetaten entered the *Gem-en-Pa'aten* (main temple) to donate to the temple and the Aten under the sun. This girl, from one of the temple walls, appears to be of Nubian descent, with her hair pulled into a bun at the nape of her neck.
(RC 1741; Dynasty 18; sandstone; 21x26 cm)





Offering Man
An official of the city of Akhetaten is shown in obeisance to an unseen image, most likely that of the royal family's cartouches, as the images of the former gods and goddesses had been proscribed. This would have come from a lintel of the man's house, demonstrating to all who entered the home where his loyalties lay.
(RC 1733; Dynasty 18; limestone; h: 25 cm)



Aten Fragment
The Aten, depicted as a solar disk, was really the concept of light rather than a sun to be worshiped. The hands reaching down represent the life-giving rays, emphasized by the ankh signs held in the hands.
(RC 819; Dynasty 18; calcite; h: 13 cm)



Amarna Potsherds
Pottery of Amarna was colored with a bright blue tint. Select hieroglyphic signs, such as the ankh, was used in conjunction with flowers to decorate the jars of this site.
(RC 4864-4867; Dynasty 18; ceramic; 3-7 cm)



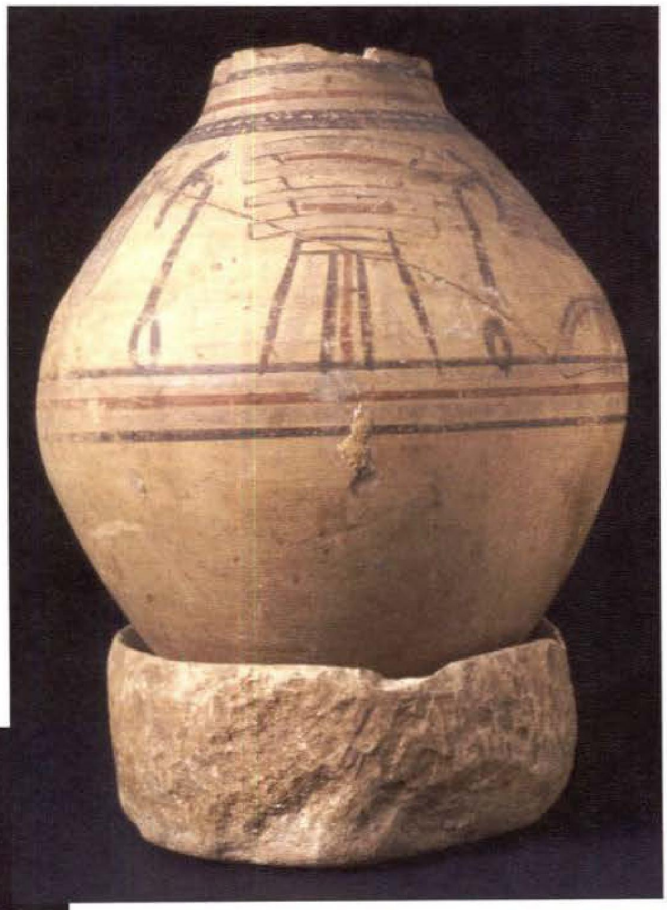
Shabti of Men
Men, the overseer of sculptors during the reign of Amenhotep III, no doubt influenced the art of the Amarna Period. His own shabti, shown here, was polychrome and shows the light paint color, unusual for men normally, but common in the art of the Amarna Period.
(RC 2089; Dynasty 18; limestone, polychrome; 26x7 cm)



Glass Amulets
Amulets of the Amarna Period were based upon the ideals of the time: Ankhs, the sign for life, were common; and the thistle depicted here was medicinal and honored a concept rather than a god or goddess.
(RC 1184, 1199; Dynasty 18; glass; h: 4 cm)

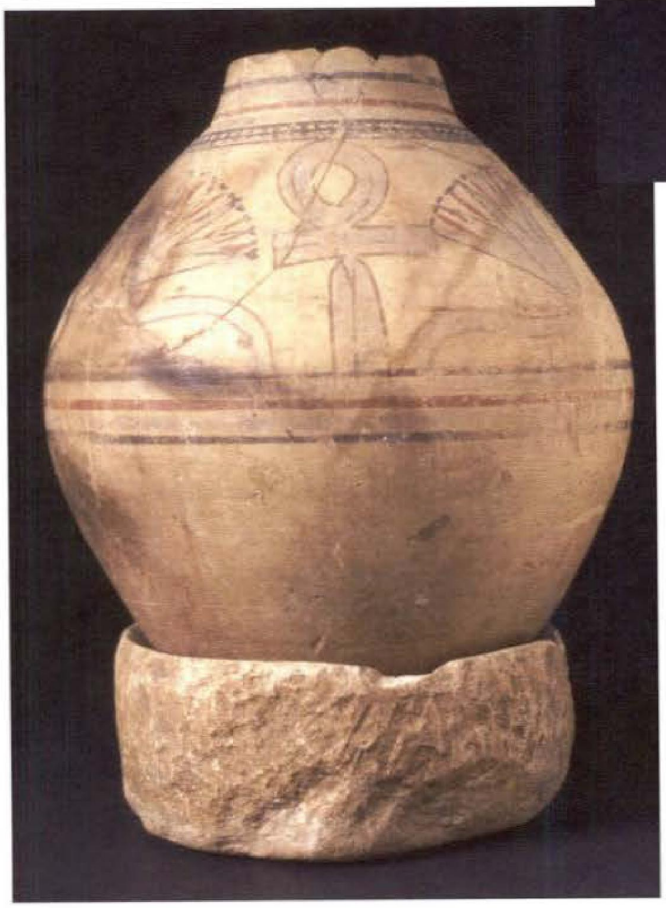
Ankhs with Mold
All materials altered by humans had a production method. Faience amulets were formed in small molds and then fired. Industry was important to ancient governments, just as today, for the taxes they produce.
(RC 79, 41, 42, 1194; New Kingdom-Late Period; h: 2-3 cm)





Jar
This side of the jar displays images considered acceptable during the Amarna Period: the Djed Pillar represents stability, while the *Was* scepters represent power.
(RC 1842; Dynasty 18; ceramic; h: 65 cm)

(opposite side detail)



The ankh, the sign for life, was very popular in the Amarna Period. Here it is flanked by blue lotuses which open their petals with the morning light.



Chair
Chairs were reserved for people of high status in ancient Egypt, as others were expected to either sit on mats or small stone seats. This form of chair was common in the Eighteenth Dynasty and is very low, as was typical. The seat would have been covered with webbing.
(RC 1715; Dynasty 18; ebony; 23x32 cm)

Basket from Amarna with Lid
Amarna was a city populated by common people and, as such, the materials of daily life were discovered in its ruins.
(RC 425; Dynasty 18; woven grasses; l: 34 cm)





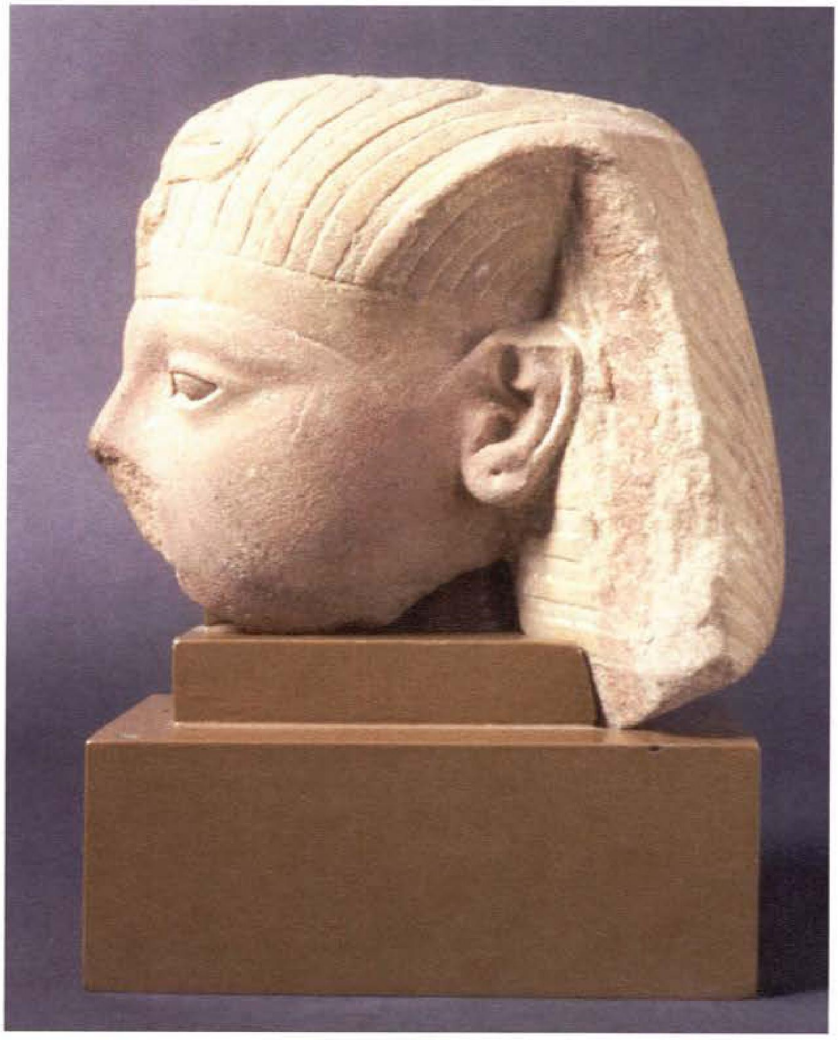
Speak-No-Evil Monkeys
With most of the gods of Egypt proscribed, the people of Amarna turned to the whimsical rather than the religious in their household amulets and images. These monkeys ably depict the concept of "speak-no-evil."
(RC 660, 785; Dynasty 18; faience; h: 2.5-4 cm)



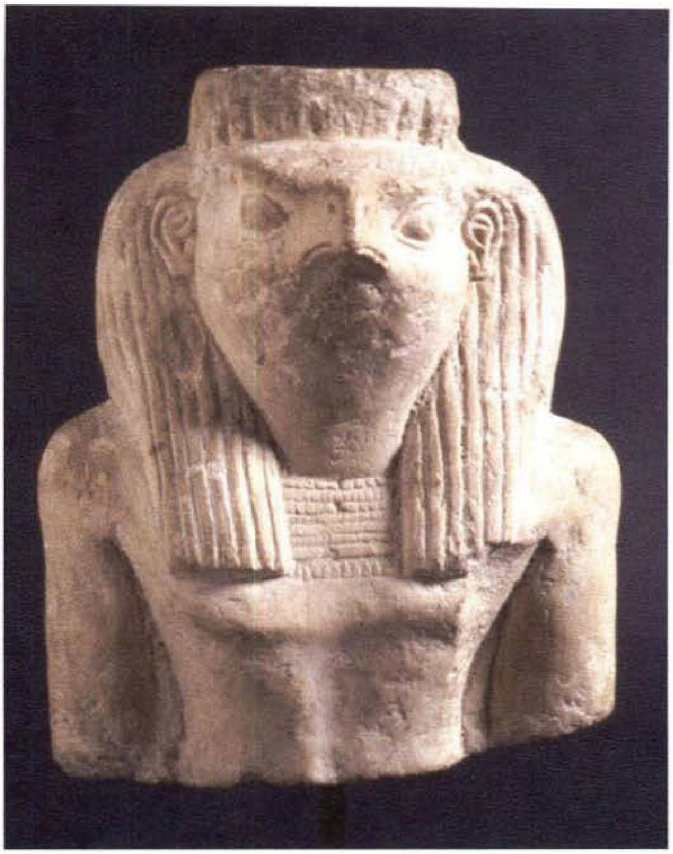
Grape Cluster
The homes and gardens of Amarna were large and well-planned. This decorative grape cluster was once fitted around the edge of a window to give the impression of a permanent grape arbor.
(RC 433; Dynasty 18; faience; h: 4.5 cm)

Ibex Ring
Desert ibexes were thought to be especially favored by the Aten during the Amarna Period, since they lived in the desert under the rays of the sun. This ring was an amulet, intended for protection and favor. As the ibex is now nearly extinct, artifacts such as this remind us of the zoological diversity of the ancient world.
(RC 1068; Dynasty 18; faience; w: 1.5 cm)





Tutankhamun Statue Fragment
Tutankhamun, perhaps the most famous pharaoh of ancient Egypt, is the king depicted in this fragment of a sculpture. It was long believed that Tutankhamun left little behind him save his tomb, but it now appears that much of his art was usurped by later kings—King Horemheb in particular.
(RC 358; Dynasty 18; red sandstone; h: 21 cm)



Re-Horakhty ▲
This image depicts Re-Horakhty, a falcon god representing Re, the sun god, in his role at sunrise and sunset; hence his name: Re of the Two Horizons.
(RC 2063; Ptolemaic Period; limestone; h: 29 cm)



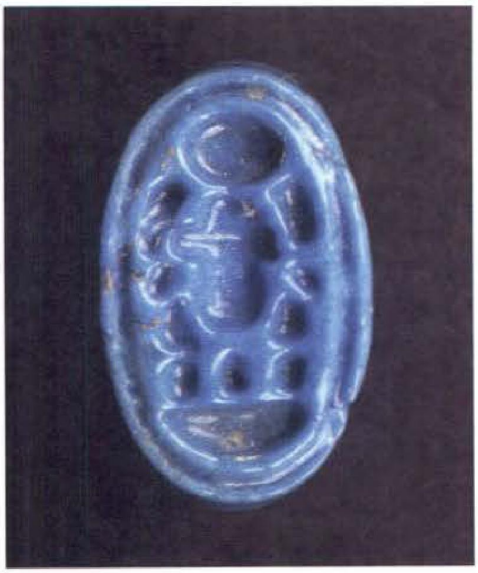
Falcon Mummy
A fine example of the skill of the mummy artist, this mummy holds a falcon inside, while the exterior is gilded and highly decorated.
(RC 98; Ptolemaic Period; cartonnage and gilt; h: 32 cm)



Falcon Coffins
Both of these coffins hold the bones of falcons, sacred to the kings of Egypt and presented to temples as a votive offering, perhaps for stability of the country.
(RC 7, 1645; Ptolemaic Period; bronze; h: 13-21 cm)



Offering King
Kings were the rulers of the nation; with this office came great responsibility. If there were any sign of a failing of ma'at, the king was responsible. This pious image depicts a king with an offering bowl held humbly in his hands.
(RC 299; Late Period; bronze; h: 5 cm)



Ring Bearing the Cartouche of Tutankhamun
The formal name of Tutankhamun was Neb-Kheperu-Re, or "golden are the comings-into-being of Re." This ring bears that cartouche and was of the type that was given as a favor to those who came to court for an audience. The fact that it was of faience, rather than a precious metal did not matter; it was the name that held its value.
(RC 686; Dynasty 18; faience; l: 1.5 cm)



Ring of Horemheb
Horemheb, general of the army of the Eighteenth Dynasty, usurped the throne after the death of Ay, who had married Tutankhamun's widow, Ankhsenamun. This ring bears the cartouche of this last king of the Eighteenth Dynasty and adopted father of the founder of the Nineteenth Dynasty, Ramses.
(RC 290; Dynasty 18; faience; h: 1.5 cm)



Shabti of Ramses II
This fragmentary shabti bears the name of Ramses II and may have come from his tomb. The shabti tells another story, as well—one of cultural change. The wear on the bottom of the shabti comes from re-use as a grinding tool by people who found it useful for its shape, rather than as a magical item for the Afterlife.
(RC 2223; Dynasty 19; calcite; h: 11 cm)



Fragment of a Colossal Ramesside Sculpture
The cartouche identifies this fragment of a colossal sculpture as one of Ramses II, while the contour demonstrates that this fragment came from the shoulder.
(RC 251; Dynasty 19; red granite; h: 47 cm)

Ramsesside Column Relief
A king of the Ramessside Period is depicted on this fragment of a column drum of monumental proportions. The column was at least 2 meters in diameter and supported a roof of at least 2 stories in height.
(RC 1720; Dynasty 19; limestone; 29x66 cm)





Royal Shabti Coffin
Model coffins were made for the shabtis of the kings. No inscription has survived to tell for which king this coffin was made. The shabti would have rested in the coffin itself, waiting to serve the king in the Afterlife.
(RC 393; New Kingdom; cedarwood; 10x29 cm)



Sistrum Bearing the Cartouche of Psamtik I Wa-Ib-Re
The sistrum was played by women, yet this sistrum bears the name of King Psamtik I. This implies that the sistrum was used by a member of the royal family, perhaps even one of the God's Wives of Amun, Nitokerty or Amenirdis (2 sides shown).
(RC 1731; Saite Period; faience; h: 24 cm)



Fragment of a Royal Scepter ◀
The familiar blue and gold royal scepters of the kings were made of alternating rings of gold and Egyptian Blue or lapis. The rings fit around a square wooden core to prevent spinning. This ring depicts various gods and goddesses in sitting positions, and may be for a deceased person, as it includes an offering formula.
(RC 2992; Third Intermediate Period; Egyptian Blue; h: 4 cm)



Ptolemaic King
Ptolemy III likely appears in this sculptural fragment.
(RC 1755; Ptolemaic Period; sandstone; h: 20 cm)

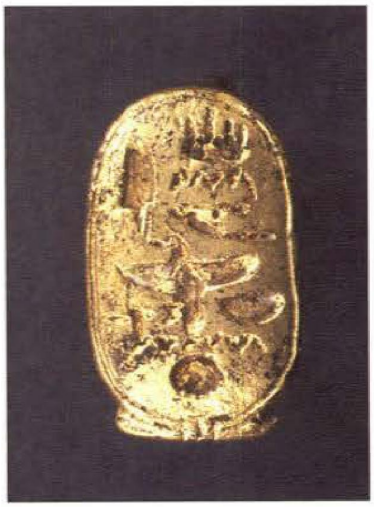
Temple Fragment
Takelot III commissioned a temple during his reign; this could be a fragment of it. The serekh name, Wadjet-Tawy, was one of his names. A monumental image of the king no doubt appeared to the right side, as the shoulder can just be made out.
(RC 1756; Late Period; limestone; 24x35 cm)



Soul of Buto
The Spirits of the Dead who reigned before Menes, legendary founder of Egypt and first king, included the Soul of Buto. Together with the Soul of Hierokonpolis, his presence legitimized all royal functions
(RC 1976; Ptolemaic Period; sandstone; h: 59 cm)







Royal Gilded Ring
This Ptolemaic period cartouche ring was made of bronze overlaid with gold.
(RC 288; Ptolemaic Period; bronze and gold; h: 2 cm)

Statue of Cleopatra VII
This statue is one of the few to survive of Cleopatra from the ancient world. It shows archaizing in the body form and is meant to remind the viewer of the many generations that Cleopatra's family ruled Egypt. This is a political statement in the form of art. The face, however, gives the true date, and the details tell us the identity of the queen depicted. For example, Cleopatra was known for her triple cobra diadem.
(RC 1582; Late Ptolemaic Period; dark stone; h: 116 cm)



EGYPT AFTER THE PHARAOHS

"I hate the queen . . . her arrogance, when she was living across the Tiber in the gardens . . . I cannot recall without extreme bitterness"

—Cicero: Letters to Attica regarding Cleopatra VII[1]

The culture of pharaonic Egypt did not end with the death of Cleopatra. It grew, flourished, and adapted long after the pharaohs were gone. This adaptation was not always simple, nor was it complete, but the ghosts of the pharaonic Egyptians live on in their descendants.

After the fall of Jerusalem at the end of the revolt against the Romans in AD 70, already prosperous communities of Jews enlarged and flourished in Egypt. From one end of Egypt to the other, synagogues grew to serve congregations of Jewish refugees at the start of the Diaspora. Judaism and its schools of learning drew the early Christian missionaries, such as Saint Mark, to Egypt.

The introduction of Christianity to Egypt was a good match. In a time of great social and institutional changes due to the Roman conquest of Egypt, the simple religion that spoke of a wonderful afterlife in exchange for suffering on this plane was well accepted. The early Egyptian Christians were leaders in the development of the entire Christian church. By the second century AD, Greek and Jewish converts in Alexandria had firmly established their church.[2]

During the persecutions under the Emperor Decius in the third century AD, some Christians fled to the desert to escape the wrath of the Roman Empire. This was the foundation of the monastic movement, which spread throughout the world from this Egyptian beginning.[3]

Christianity was an illegal sect for centuries, as it pledged allegiance to a higher power than Rome. The Christians of Egypt found protection and a common bond in the symbols of their ancestors. The ankh, the ancient symbol for life, was adapted as a secret symbol for the cross. It was largely due to Egyptian Christians that the cross became the symbol of Christ, rather than, for example, the fish. The cross was a Roman symbol of a shameful death, much like the hangman's noose. The secret use of the ankh as a Christian symbol both assured the survival of the ancient hieroglyph and introduced its new use throughout Christendom. The ankh and the cross lived on as one.

The official declaration of Christian faith by the Emperor Constantine and his mother, leading to the eventual acceptance of Christianity as the official

Coptic Cross
This cross provides a vital glimpse into the multicultural world of Coptic Egypt. The designs, blending older motifs with Christian iconography, match exactly those on contemporary funeral stelae from the area around Thebes. It features a floral or solar center, and vine-like carvings on the arms, which would have held meaning for many different groups during this period of religious diversity.
(RC 1644;AD c. 700; limestone; 43.6x31.3x6.8 cm)

religion of the Roman Empire, eased the burden on Egypt's Christians, who were now called "Copts," a corruption of the Greek word for Egypt.[4]

However, the formal institutionalization of Christianity resulted in the Coptic Christians engaging in contentious debates over doctrinal issues that had not been resolved. One major question concerned the exact nature of Christ. A priest in Alexandria, Arius, started the formal engagement of this dispute, which eventually led to the First Council of Nicaea and the Nicene Creed.[5] This led to a great schism among the Christians that has lasted to this day.

The breakdown of the Roman Empire into two separate entities, one ruled from Rome and the other from Constantinople, also assisted in perpetuating this schism. Much of Christianity is still divided into Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. Today, the Orthodox Coptic Church of Egypt lives on. Many early church saints are Egyptians, including Saint Anthony and Saint Catherine of Alexandria.[6]

However, not all went well for the monuments of pharaonic Egypt. The Christians damaged the ancient monuments for religion's sake. Eyes were gouged out of statues and reliefs in an attempt to make them more acceptable to the Christian faith. Much of this damage appears to be actual "ritual killing," in which certain body parts are damaged to render the image "dead." Much of this damage was performed for peace of mind, as the Copts moved into the ancient temples to set up households or to establish churches within their still-standing walls.[7]

The images of the ancients lived on in Coptic textiles. Figures of the saints in procession were in the same positions of adoration as seen in pharaonic tomb reliefs. Vines and lotus flowers were imbued with ancient meaning not lost in the modern age of Christianity.

Following Cleopatra, as Greeks, Romans, Copts, Jews, and eventually Arabs influenced and changed Egyptian culture and art, the time periods are somewhat murky. Amidst diverse cultural and political influences, clearly defined divisions of dynasty and kingdom were no longer relevant for delineating periods of time, and much overlap occurred between the different periods of post-pharaonic Egypt. Nowhere is this rich overlapping more obvious than in the changing artistic styles during the era between Cleopatra and the Arab conquest in AD 642. The Greeks were influenced by traditional Egyptian artistic styles, and the Romans, in turn, were influenced by this combined style, called Ptolemaic. The Romans adopted much of the trappings of Egyptian culture, and the worship of Isis became one of the popular "Mystery Cults" of the Roman Empire. The Roman art shows that, while they may have adopted the images, the Romans did not entirely understand the Egyptian ethos. They honored the exotic, without understanding its roots.[8]

By the time Christianity arrived in Egypt, the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, and Jews living there had created a style of art that was repudiated by the Christians. These Copts, as Christians were known, thought they were refusing to honor the previous religions and culture, yet at the same time they adopted many of the

motifs. Though stylized, the imagery can be traced back to Egyptian, Greek, and Roman motifs; overall, it is very Egyptian.

Many of these "cultures" coexisted, living either in peace or enmity. It was the interaction of these groups that furthered the development of all of them. Each culture melded into the other rather smoothly, preventing us from drawing hard lines in the sand on date and style. But with the arrival of Islam, the art changed drastically. The continuum was broken and a bold new style entered the art of Egypt.

The coming of Islam to Egypt in AD 642 was a stunning change for the established Christians and Jews. The Copts welcomed the Arabs, as the former were now allowed to choose their own patriarch and were freed from competing theologies. The Muslims became well established in Egypt, and the Coptic Christians and the Egyptian Jews were allowed to continue to practice their faith as a religion of the "Book," as the Muslims considered both Christianity and Judaism.

The art of Islam was strictly iconoclastic and emphasized geometric patterns and floral motifs. As living animals and people were considered to have "souls," their images were banned. The lively art of Islam was colorful and fresh, and it was welcomed in Egypt.

Islam flourished to the detriment of the other religions, as social taxes were gradually levied against the Christians and Jews, unless they converted. No one knows the true numbers of Christians or Jews at this time, as many converted in name to avoid the tax burden. In one incident, the tax placed on the Christians was so high that they could not pay it and risked imprisonment. The Jewish community paid the tax for them, and received in return a Coptic Church that had been built on a synagogue centuries before.[9]

Egypt did not rule itself from the fall of the Ptolemies until 1952. Modern Egypt is a mélange of ancient and modern. The household traditions of the common people of pharaonic Egypt survive in the farms and villages of both Upper and Lower Egypt. Blue beads or eye-shaped pendants are placed on baby boys for protection after birth, just as in the New Kingdom. Many boats travel the Nile with bloody handprints, marked with the blood of a sacrificed ram for protection from evil and bad luck.[10] Tombs in Lower Egypt are organized into "cities of the dead," with small houses built over the graves in place of the small marker rock dictated by Islam. The tombs are occupied by men hired to maintain them and read the Koran to the dead on a regular basis, much like the ka priests of the ancient tombs.[11] Verses of the Koran are imprinted on pieces of metal in the shape of pyramids, which are hung from the rear-view mirrors of cabs in Cairo. These are meant to act as amulets of protection in the city's dangerous traffic.[12]

Egypt remains a thriving culture and society. Devoutly religious and enthusiastically modern, the Egyptians have kept a trace of their ancestors' beliefs and practices while creating a unique society. The people of Egypt are proud of the country they have created and continue to develop their energetic civilization in this modern age.



Coptic Textile Fragments
The larger of these two fragments hung vertically down the front of a robe. Its images include worshiping saints, as shown by their raised arms. Animals identify the saints through association. The smaller fragment displays crosses hidden within the floral design.
(RC 2267, 2292; AD 400-600; from Akhmim; linen and wool; l: up to 30 cm)



Colorful Textile Fragments
The women in the center of the left fragment may represent different stories to different patrons in a weaver's shop. To a Christian, they could be the martyred saints devoured by beasts in the arena. To a Greek pagan, they could be revelers of Dionysius. The other fragments display allegorical images of beasts.
(RC 2295, 2275, 2298; AD 400-600; from Akhmim; linen and wool; l: 5-21 cm)



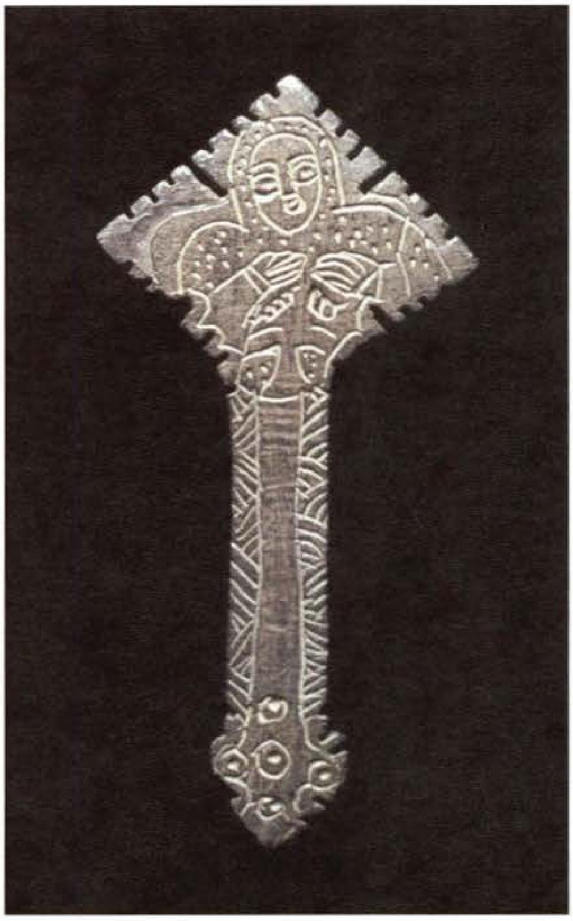
Vestments and Virgins
The upper textile, called a *clavis*, was originally the ornament for the front of a tunic. It displays images of the apostles of Christ, evidenced by their halos of sainthood. The vine around the edges of the design could represent the quote of Christ: "I am the vine," but it also has ancient Egyptian fertility precedents. The ladies on the lower fragment may represent martyred saints.
(RC 1598, 2266 ; AD 400-600; from Akhmim; linen and wool; l: up to 30 cm)



Weaving Kit
The tools of the ancient Coptic weaver can be seen in this grouping. Fine threads were cut with the fine bone knife, and spinning was accomplished with the decorated ivory spindle. After the pharaohs, when images were unpopular, detailed decoration became popular in household items.
(RC 1076, 1825, 1096; ivory, bone, copper; AD 300-600; 2 cm-10 cm)



A Faiyum Portrait
The people of Egypt changed their artistic style, but not the reasons for which it was done. Most likely, this portrait hung in the man's home while he lived and then was cut down to fill the role of mummy mask in this late period.
(RC 601; AD 130; wood, paint; h: 42 cm)





Hand-Held Cross
Priests of the Coptic Church carry hand-crosses such as this even today. The image on the front (top) could be a saint or perhaps the Virgin, clutching her heart in remembrance of the Biblical phrase ". . . and a sword shall pierce your heart" The reverse side (bottom) of this small cross is a stylized Coptic cross, although the handle bears the divine beard design, a hold-over from a more ancient time.
(RC 1962; AD 600; steatite; h: 10 cm)



Chi Rho Lamp
Chi-Rho, the monogram of Christ, makes up the handle of this bronze lamp. The origin of the name of Cairo is a mystery. Some suggest the origin is the Arabic Qaihira, "the victorious," but many believe it has an origin in this ancient monogram. The true answer may be that it came from both words; people heard what they wanted to hear.
(RC 1608; AD 400-1000; bronze; 8x7 cm)



Allegorical Sleeve Fragment
As with most Coptic textiles, allegorical references abound in this fragment of a sleeve. The eagle is an animal associated with Saint Mark, the apostle who brought Christianity to Egypt. The hare was an ancient symbol of Christianity. The edges of this fragment are decorated with the lotus and papyrus, ancient symbols for Upper and Lower Egypt.
(RC 2299; AD 600; from Akhmim; linen and wool; h: 12 cm)



Ladies Ornament Detail
This textile is a fine example of the many interpretations possible of the same image. A Christian might look at these ladies and see martyred saints devoured in the arena. A pagan might see Dionysian revelers in a dancing drunken haze.
(RC 2306; late 6th or early 7th century AD; from Akhmim; linen and wool; h: 7 cm)



Detail of Saints
A detail of the saints of the early Christian Church, with small halos around their head. They are in a standard pharaonic Egyptian pose.
(RC 2302; late 6th or early 7th century AD; from Akhmim; linen and wool; 30x5 cm)

Roman Period Woman in Egyptian Clothing
This portrait depicts a young woman in garb typical of the Roman period in Egypt. She wears a loose dress with a colorful band on each shoulder.
(RC 1759; c. AD 100; encaustic on wood; 37x20 cm)

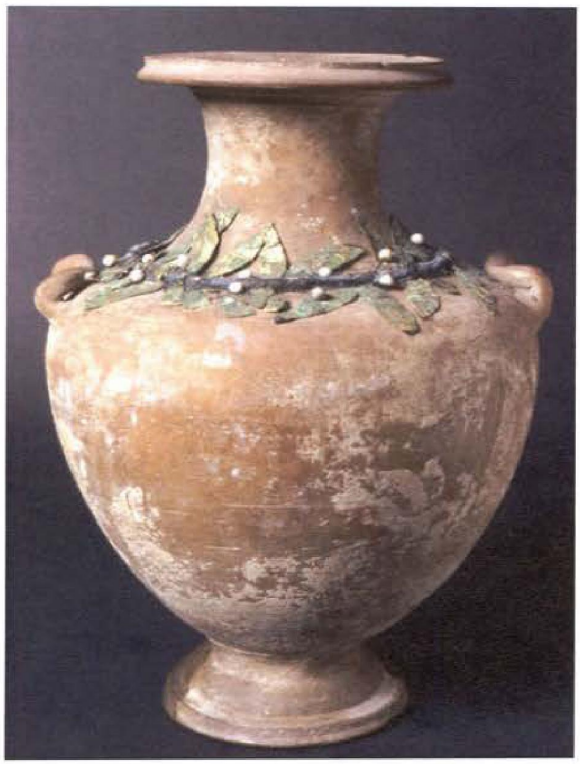


Square Cut from a Woman's Tunic
Women were more likely to have figured or floral decorations in their tunics, which were also more elaborately decorated.
(RC2295; late 5th or early 6th century AD; from Akhmim; linen and wool; 10x18 cm)





Greek Hydria
The Greeks specialized in ceramics that were more elegant than those made by the Egyptians. This finely made jar is decorated with laurel leaves.
(RC 1630; Ptolemaic Period; ceramic, bronze, gold leaf; 39x27 cm)



Greek Hydria: Full Image
Fine artifacts such as this show a workmanship which hint that this item was made for an offering to a temple, or some other high honor. The leaves are of gilded bronze.



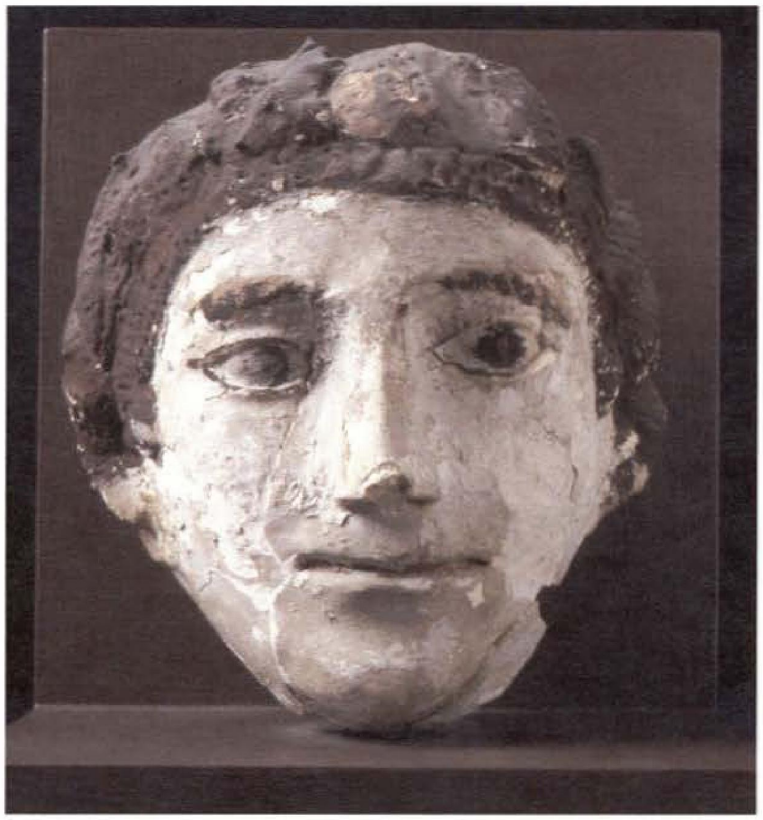
Detail of an Engagement Gift
The cupid and a swan on a robe might mean that this was a gift from a suitor or a betrothed.
(RC 2319; 5th or 6th century AD; from Akhmim; linen and wool; h: 23 cm)



Woven Child's Face
Small textiles also took the place of the mummy mask, as can be seen in this example. The face of a young boy was woven into this fabric to form his burial image.
(RC 1688; post AD 600; from Akhmim; linen and wool; h: 17 cm)



Crocodile Lamp
Roman Egypt held onto more ancient Egyptian beliefs. The crocodile god Sobek is honored in this lamp. Without a doubt, the owners felt that if they honored Sobek, they were less likely to lose a family member to the river god.
(RC 28; Roman Period; bronze; l: 26 cm)



Alexandrian Face
Greeks and Romans memorialized their dead in plaster portraits on or near the tomb. This face came from Alexandria, the center of culture for the Roman world.
(RC 1653; Ptolemaic Period; plaster and paint; 25x18 cm)



Roman Lamp
Roman technology produced standing lamps that spread more light than their small ceramic counterparts. This lamp is very similar to those found in the ruins of Pompeii.
(RC 2422; Roman Period; bronze; h: 20 cm)



Glass Weight
Weights were made of glass for use in measuring fine items, such as perfume and incense.
(RC 776; Byzantine; glass; diam: 2 cm)

Romano-Egyptian Glazed Jar
Egyptian techniques were added to the later Roman style to create a new Egyptian style unique to the region. This jar is of faience, an Egyptian technique, but in the shape of fine Roman ware.
(RC 1745; Roman Period; glazed ceramic; AD 100; diam: 20 cm)



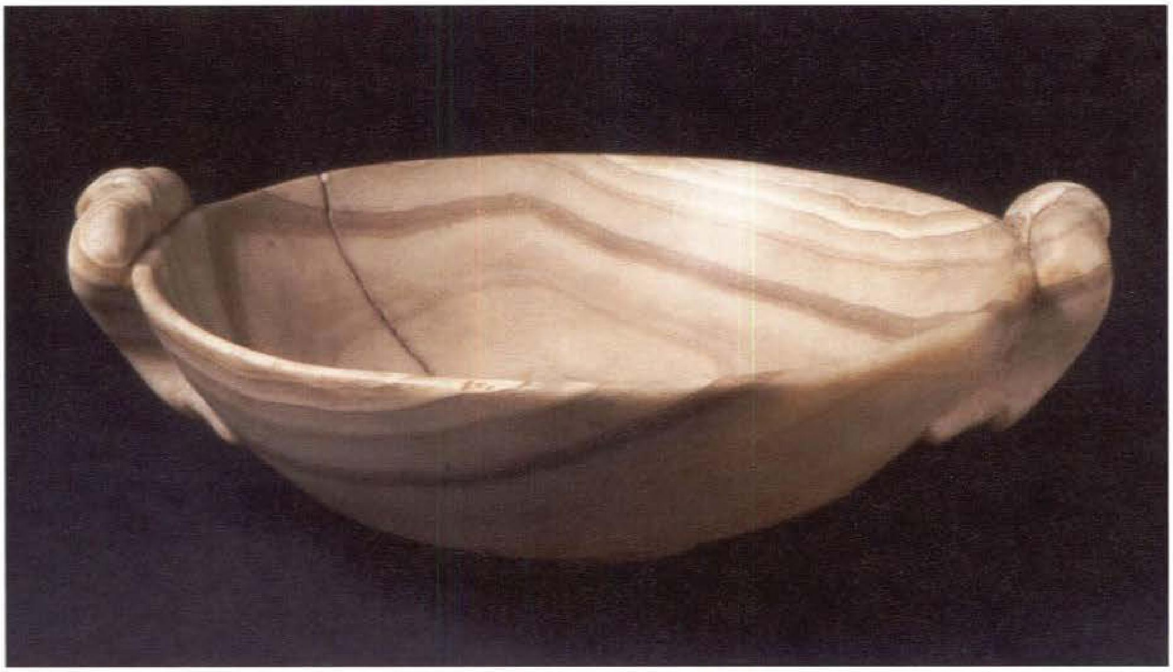


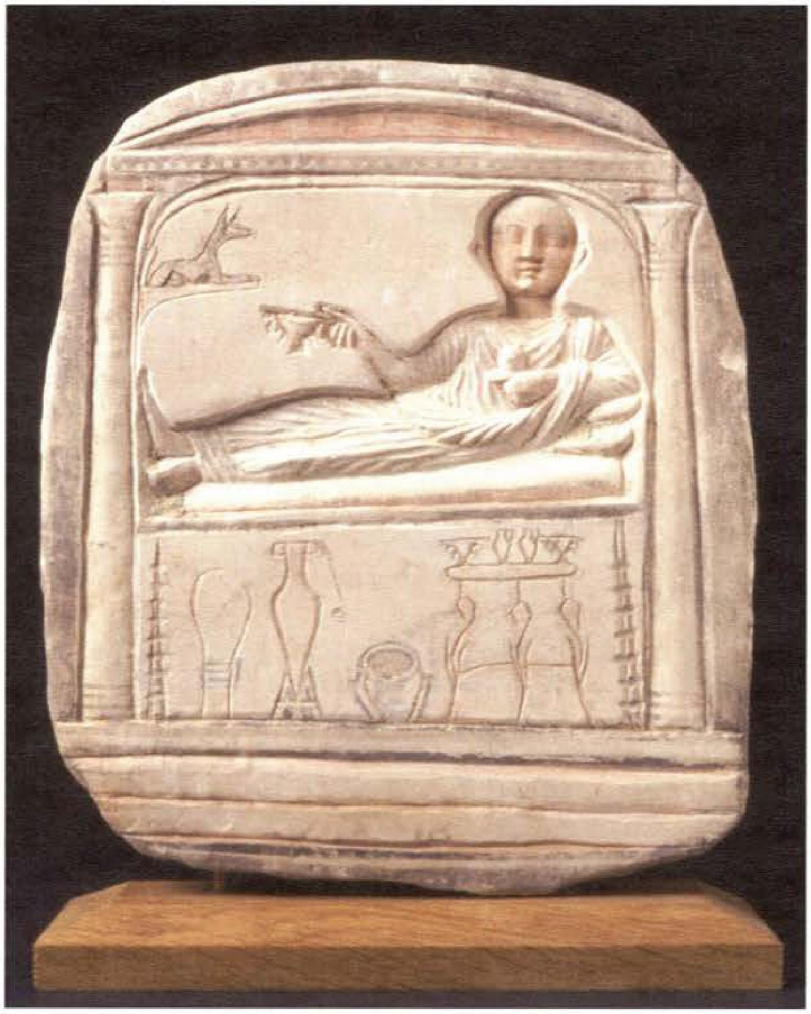
Alexandrian Coinage
Coinage was introduced to Egypt during the period of Greek rule. These coins were all produced in Alexandria's mint.
(RC 3145, 3146; 3168, 3192; Ptolemaic Period; copper, silver; diam: 1-3 cm)



Roman Calcite Bowl with Handles
Fine stonework was used by wealthy Romans to serve their guests at parties. This fine platter is made of calcite.
(RC 1758; Roman Period; calcite; diam: 34 cm)

(rim detail)





Roman Funerary Stele
This stele from Kom Abu Billo shows the characteristic Roman pose of the deceased, but includes the god of the Egyptian afterlife, Anubis. This man is depicted presiding at his own funerary feast in this memorial dated to the 1st-3rd centuries AD.
(RC 2246; Late Roman Period; limestone; h: 30 cm)

Textile Detail
The vine is a time-honored image of Christ and eternal life, yet it had an Egyptian precedent as well—the fertility vine. A certain vine from Egypt had medicinal use in childbirth and became associated with life and birth. This image, therefore, could be interpreted in different ways.
(RC 2318; from Akhmim; AD 400-700; linen and wool; l: 38 cm)



Ptolemaic Coin
(RC 2986; Ptolemaic Period; copper; diam: 2 cm)

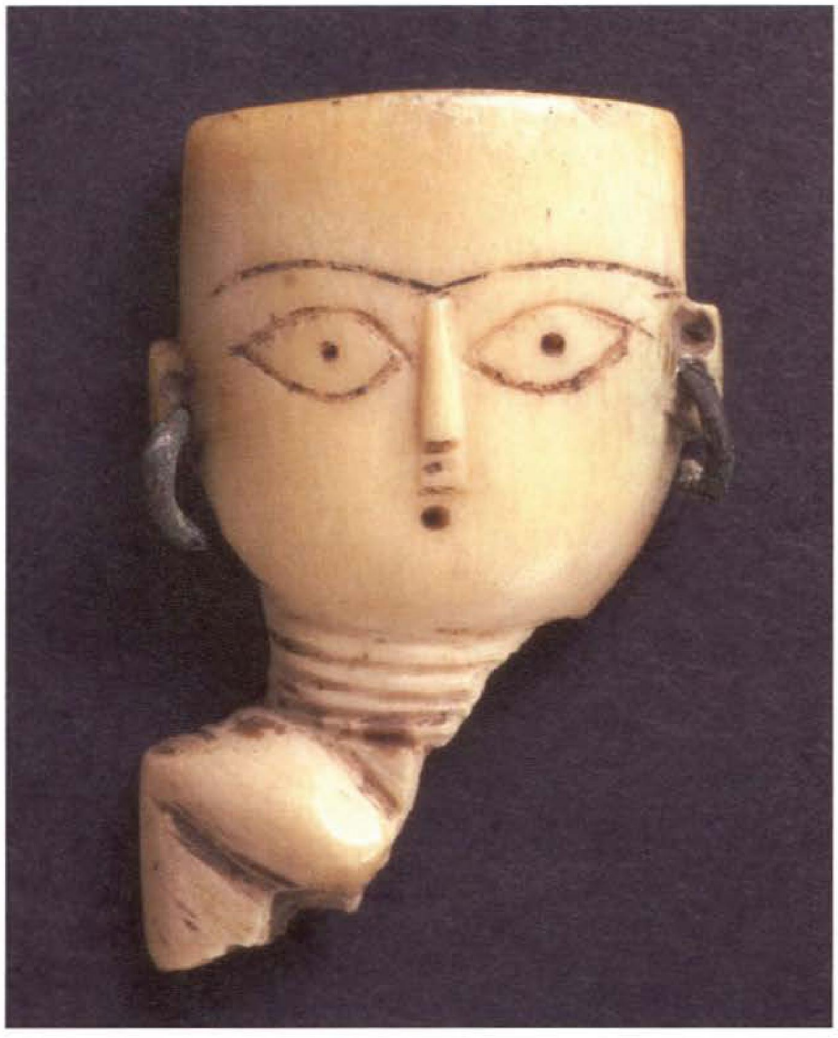




Herakleides
Wealthy Romans chose to be depicted in this manner on their funerary markers. However, the writing is Greek, identifying the man as Herakleides.
(RC 1744; c. AD 100; from Ashmunein; limestone; 66x33 cm)



Christos Circle
Although not identified, the face in this bronze circle may well be that of Christ, who was not depicted with a beard until late in Early Christianity.
(RC 453; c. AD 300; bronze; diam: 6 cm)



Byzantine Doll
The Coptic Christians were at times iconoclastic, but not always. This doll dates from the Christian Era.
(RC 1254; c. AD 700; ivory, bronze; h: 5.6 cm)



Tutu
The Roman period god Tutu shows a strange combination of Egyptian and Roman traits, resulting in a look specific to him. The Nemes headdress of the king, the body of a lion, and the tail of a snake all show that the Romans really did not understand Egyptian imagery.
(RC 1721; Late Roman Period; limestone; 29x61 cm)

Islamic Boat Lamp
Strict iconoclasts, the Muslims used non-living images to fulfill the human need for artwork. This lamp is in the shape of a boat.
(RC 253; post AD 700; steatite; 3x16 cm)





OTHER CULTURES

"My Brother, for your household, your chief wives, your son, your wives, your chariots, your many horses, and in Egypt, your country, may all go very well."

—Message from the king of Alasiya to the king of Egypt, c. 1100 BC[1]

The Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum's collection is not limited to ancient Egypt. Materials from other cultures that were in the vicinity of Egypt and which sustained contact with the Nile Valley are also included. The most sizable portion of the objects of other cultures relate to Mesopotamia, a great cultural complex considered by many to be one of the progenitors of civilization itself.

The Egyptians had extensive contacts with numerous cultures over many millennia, so it is not possible to simply classify the contacts and materials by date and age. The continuum of contact in the ancient world is notable. While it has been generally believed that ancient peoples led isolated lives culturally, it is becoming clear that the trade and personal contacts of the ancient world were quite complex and can be understood in much the way that modern economic and trade systems are studied.[2] Trade items passed through many hands in the ancient world and, in many cases, were carried by people who traveled as well. The Egyptians received lapis lazuli from what is now called Afghanistan through Mesopotamia. The people of Mesopotamia received gold and artwork from Egypt. The people of Greece and Crete sought the famous perfumes of Egypt, while they offered pottery, art, and eventually, glass in return. Tin from the British Isles passed through many hands to finally arrive in Egypt for the manufacture of bronze. Each of these products bore a human imprint, as merchants and traders worked together to provide the materials needed in a pre-industrial world.

The earliest contacts between the ancient Egyptians and other cultures came in the form of extensive trade. Mesopotamia was the source of artistic inspiration in the Late Predynastic Period as well as rare materials such as lapis lazuli and cylinder seals. Niched-brick architecture of the very earliest periods of Egypt, a style that continued on through to the mosques of modern Egypt, originated in Mesopotamia.[3] This earliest trade came through the Wadi Hammamat, a trade route from the Red Sea to the Nile Valley, toward the towns of Upper Egypt. Nekhen, later known as Hierakonpolis (modern Kom el-Ahmar) was a center of this activity. Another site in the far north of Egypt, called Buto, has also shown evidence of Mesopotamian influence, if

◀ **Household Goddess** *(RC 2469)*. See page 134.

not residents. Since Egyptian materials do not appear in ancient Mesopotamia in the quantity seen in the reverse, it is likely that the Egyptians sent raw materials, such as gold, to Mesopotamia.[4]

This influx of luxury goods led to the unification of Egypt, as the Upper Egyptian towns became powerful and a hierarchy developed. Small border towns that thrived on trade with the Levant were swallowed whole and some were destroyed, leading to a new relationship with the Levant.[5] Lebanon provided cedar for the large structures that appeared. Gold was brought from Nubia, Upper Egypt, and the Sudan.

Trade by sea was a time-honored activity of the ancients, and the Egyptians engaged in this to a full extent. Egyptian ships followed the shorelines of the Levant and Africa, and crossed over to the shores of Arabia in their search for trade goods and luxury items. The Greeks also left their mark on ancient Egyptian trade, as their olive oil and artisans traveled to Egypt by sea.

The oases of ancient Egypt's Western Desert were situated on long caravan routes that extended into equatorial Africa. Imported ivory, ebony, apes, and ostriches traveled through these oases on their way to Pharaoh's court, as did, no doubt, immigrants.[6]

With all of these trade contacts came culture and influence. The Egyptians took what they liked from other artistic traditions and modified it for their own use, in a manner that fit their own culture. This Egyptian talent for cultural adaptation was evident from the earliest days and may have led to the creation of hieroglyphs. While writing in Mesopotamia had an obvious trail of development through a token system, hieroglyphs appeared in Egypt almost without preamble, fully formed, around 3150 BC at the site of Hierakonpolis.[7]

Egypt's concept of foreign peoples was not one of equality. For example, the people of the east were called "vile, wretched Easterners," a concept that was not limited to residents of that one cardinal point.[8] Egyptians considered themselves to be culturally superior to the peoples surrounding them and believed that their traditions were representative of the apex of human civilization. Foreign cultures were considered unusual and seemed chaotic to the Egyptian's ordered way of life. For the Egyptians, who valued conformity and order, these were seen as unacceptable and they strove to exclude such elements from their comfortable way of life. Notably, this aversion to foreign culture was not an aversion to people who were true citizens of Egypt, but possessed various racial characteristics. To the Egyptians, culture defined citizenship, certainly not race.[9]

Contact between proud cultures led to tension as well as trade, which at times resulted in warfare. The Egyptians were a powerful nation with great skills and contacts. When a war broke out, they took advantage of these contacts to make full strategic use of friendly nations. The Nubian archers employed by pharaonic Egypt were in high demand by their other allies and may have been a sort of "special forces" of ancient Egypt. During

the New Kingdom, as shown by the Amarna Letters, city-states in the Levant were used as a sort of buffer zone against attacks on Egypt, and outposts populated by Egyptians were scattered throughout the region of Israel and Palestine.[10] The rulers of these small client states clearly believed that they were equals in the relationship, however, and constantly requested gifts of gold and protection, which often went unheeded.

Egypt did not exist in a vacuum. While it was long believed that she led an isolated existence, thanks to her deserts, we now know that Egypt's were teeming with trade and nomadic peoples, and her ports were full of ships and their cargoes. She had extensive contact with her neighbors, and those contacts both changed Egypt and made her more certain of her place in the world and the value of her own special culture.

A Letter from the King of Egypt

Do you not write to the king, my lord, saying, "I am your servant like all of the previous mayors in this city"?

So, perform your service for your king, you lord, and you will live. You yourself know that the king does not fail when he rages against all of Canaan...and know that the king is hale like the Sun in the sky...from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun, all goes very well.

Excerpt from a letter from Egypt's king to Aziru, ruler of Amurru, c. 1300 BC[11]

Mesopotamia

He went on a distant journey, pushing himself to exhaustion,
but then was brought to peace.
He carved on a stone stela all of his toils,
and built the wall of Uruk-Haven,
the wall of the sacred Eanna Temple, the holy sanctuary.
Look at its wall which gleams like copper(?),
inspect its inner wall, the likes of which no one can equal!
Take hold of the threshold stone—it dates from ancient times!

Epic of Gilgamesh, Tablet 1[12]

Greece

Oh Muse, Thou dear one, sing to me,
Commence and order my song.
Cool breezes blowing from Thy groves
In-spire my breast and rouse my heart.
Calliopeia Thou wise
Principal of the Muses delightful,
Thou too, wise mystery guide,
Leto's child, Thou Delian Paean,
Be propitious and stand by me.

Hymn to the Muse (Mesomedes, AD 117-138)[13]

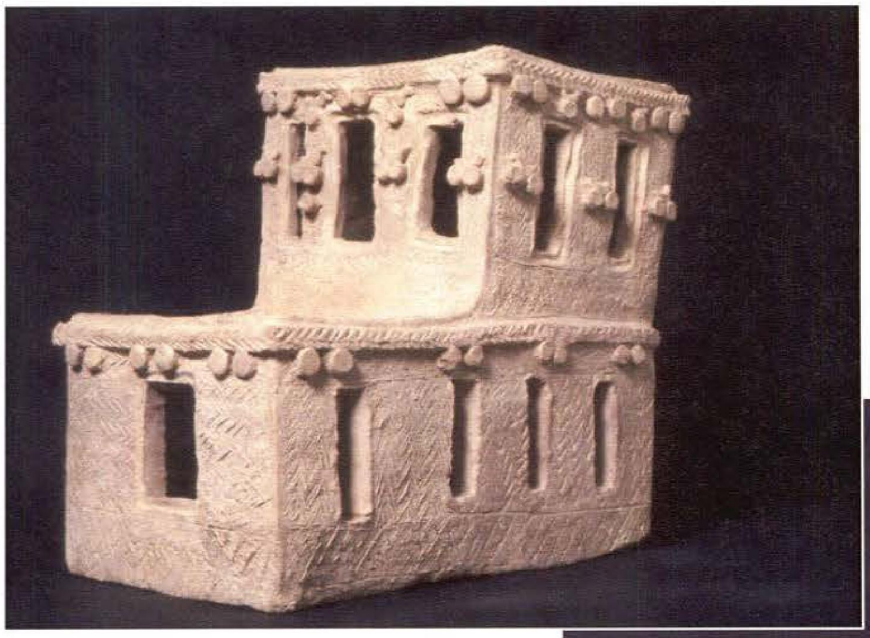


Tablet with Seal
Seals were used to "sign" a document. This seal is of Marjuk-Ikin-Apla, Erib-Biti Priest of the sun god Samas.
(RC 1050; Babylonian; clay; h: 4 cm)



Claw Amulet
Lions were dangerous, powerful, and admired, and this image of a lion's claw was meant for protection.
(RC 1367; Jamdet Nasr Period, Mesopotamian, 3100-2900 BC; jasper; l: 1.5 cm)

Mesopotamian House Model
The intended purpose of these kinds of house models remains an enigma. As some have been found in domestic contexts, it is likely that the concept of "spirit house," a home for the souls of ancestors, is what they represent.
(RC 2084; 1800-2500 BC; ceramic; h: 40 cm)

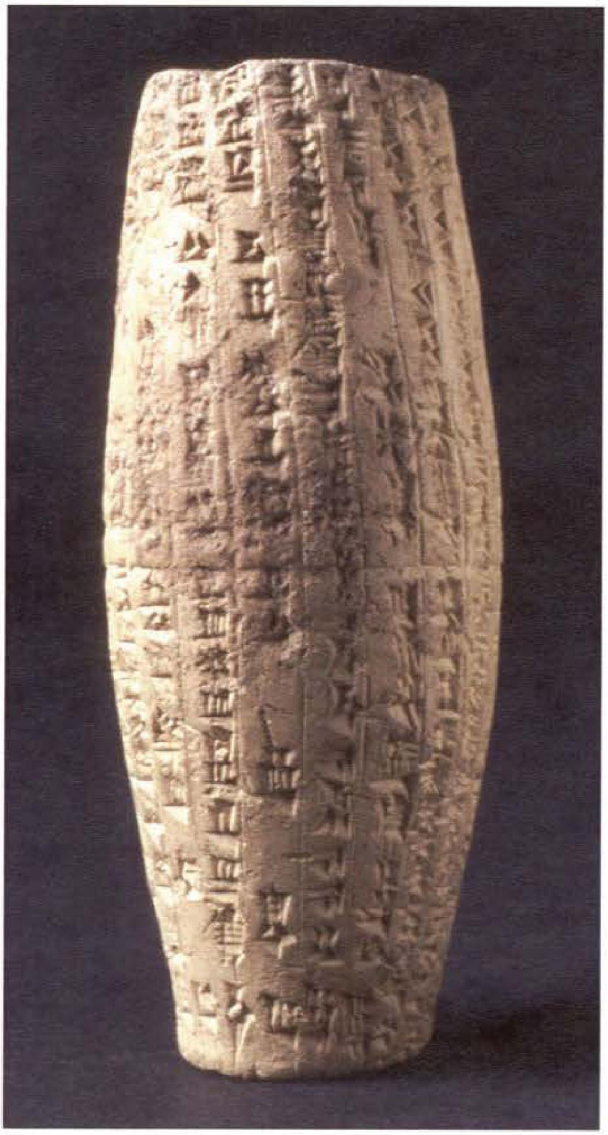


(detail from side)





Weights
Mesopotamian bureaucracy was elaborate due to extensive taxation, and weights such as these were used for accuracy.
(RC 1365, 1368; Sumerian; marble, chalcedony; l: 1, 2 cm)



Cylinder Declaration of Nebuchadnezzar
Nebuchadnezzar's proclamation was related to his construction of a new temple. This was one of six such cylinders made, only one other of which has survived.
(RC 368; Late Babylonian; clay; h: 13 cm)



Bevel-Rimmed Bowls
These simple bowls are ubiquitous to the Uruk time period, at the precise time in which Predynastic Egypt was in close contact with Mesopotamia. These bowls are simple, yet common, and are very closely sized. They possibly held a day's ration for a corvée laborer.
(RC 2928, 2929, 2930; Uruk Period, 3200-3100 BC; clay; 8-9 cm)



Household Goddesses
These fragments of a goddess from Persia clearly display fertility aspects, as her breasts are presented to the viewer. These images were buried in front of the front doors of houses on the establishment of a new household.
(RC 2457-2468; c. 1000 BC; ceramic; h: 5-7 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)



Knife
Fine leaf-shaped knives were specific to the Persian time period.
(RC 1716; Persian; bronze; l: 15 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)



Household Goddess
This household goddess was placed at the threshold of the house at which she was found, no doubt to protect the house and all who entered it.
(RC 2469; c. 1000 BC; from Marlik, Iran; ceramic; h: 5 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)



Hairpins
These elaborately detailed hairpins were excavated in Iran, from the site of Marlik Rudbar.
(RC 2933, 2934; Persian; from Marlik, Iran; bronze; l: 17 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)

Hairpin and Bracelet
Fine jewelry and personal adornment seem to be a human instinct. These artifacts were found in Marlik, Iran.
(RC 1887, 1395; Persian; spun glass, bronze; 5-20 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)





Musicians
Musicians were a special class in Persia and lived somewhat outside of the strict social system, traveling and performing for the public.
(RC 1880, 1881; c. 1000 BC; ceramic; h: 3, 6 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)

Beaked Jars
A time-marker for the Sassanian time period, these spouted jars are found on many sites, made of both ceramic and stone.
(RC 2064, 1874; AD 224-637; from Marlik, Iran; ceramic; 26-30 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)





Swords
Weapons of war are among the most common items found in the grave goods of the ancient world, and for millennia Mesopotamia and Persia were a crossroads for armies.
(RC 1898, 1899; Persian; bronze; l: 29-32 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)

Spearheads
Spears were ideal weapons for the infantry. The further you stood from your opponent, the more likely you were to survive.
(RC 1900, 1901; Persian; bronze; l: 30-32 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)

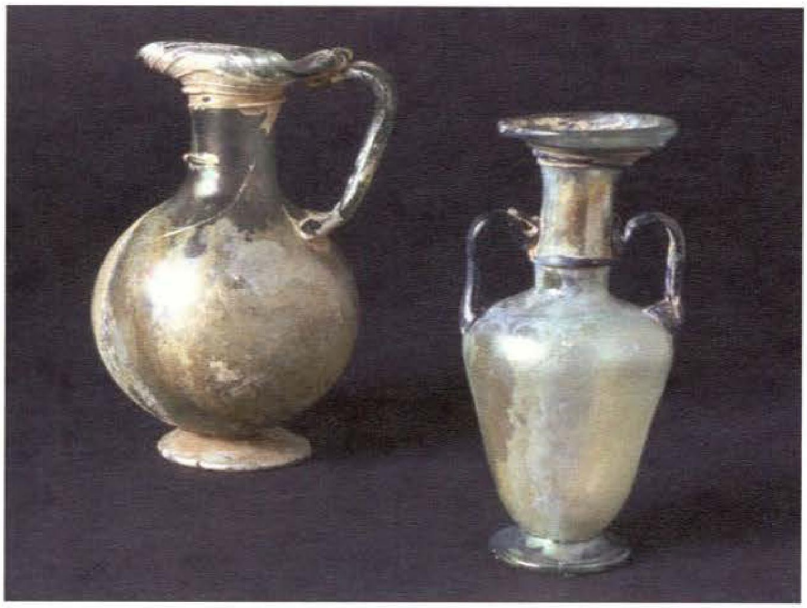




Bronze Sword
(RC 1896; c. 1000 BC; bronze; l: 40 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)



Knife Blades
(RC 1896, 1901; Persian; bronze; l: 30-40 cm; from the Sabonovich Collection)



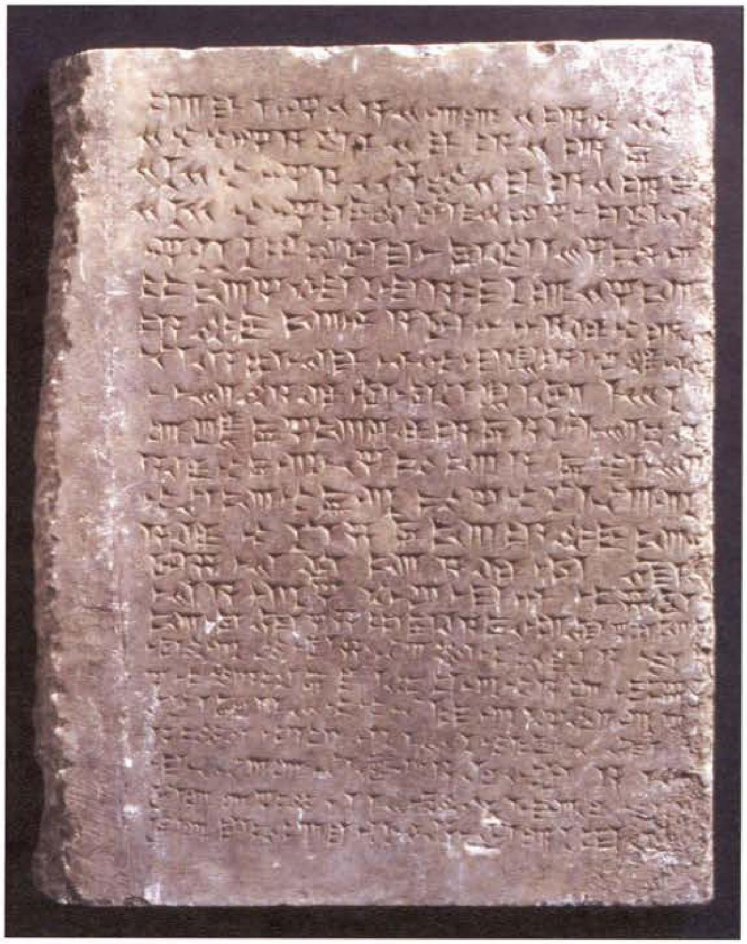
Cretan Glass
The glass of Crete is distinctive in its quality and shape. A prized trade item, it is unusual for these fragile items to survive to the modern day.
(RC 1449, 2572; 3rd to 4th century AD; from Crete; h: 15-20 cm)



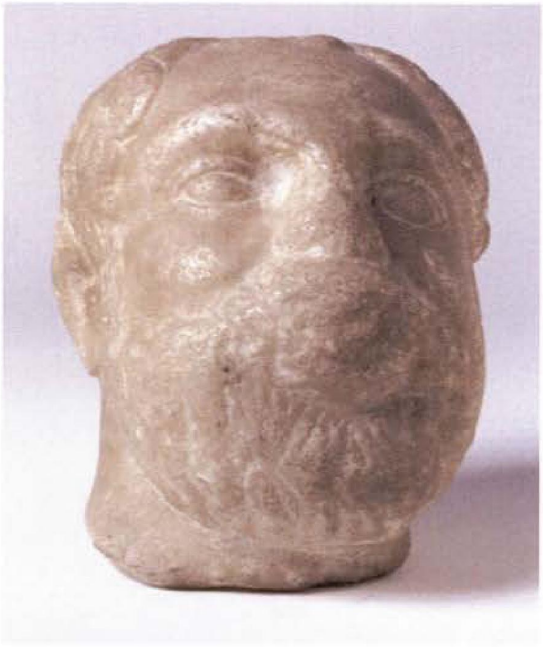
Glazed Parthian Ishtar
Parthian coffins, while rare, were finely glazed items in the form of a slipper. This fragment of a coffin shows the goddess Ishtar.
(RC 688; 247 BC-AD 228; Parthian; glazed ceramic; 30x10cm)



Persian Padlock
Locks were no doubt invented as soon as there was wealth to protect. This padlock from Persia is remarkably sophisticated for its age.
(RC 2570; post-AD 700; Persian; bronze; 1x3 cm)



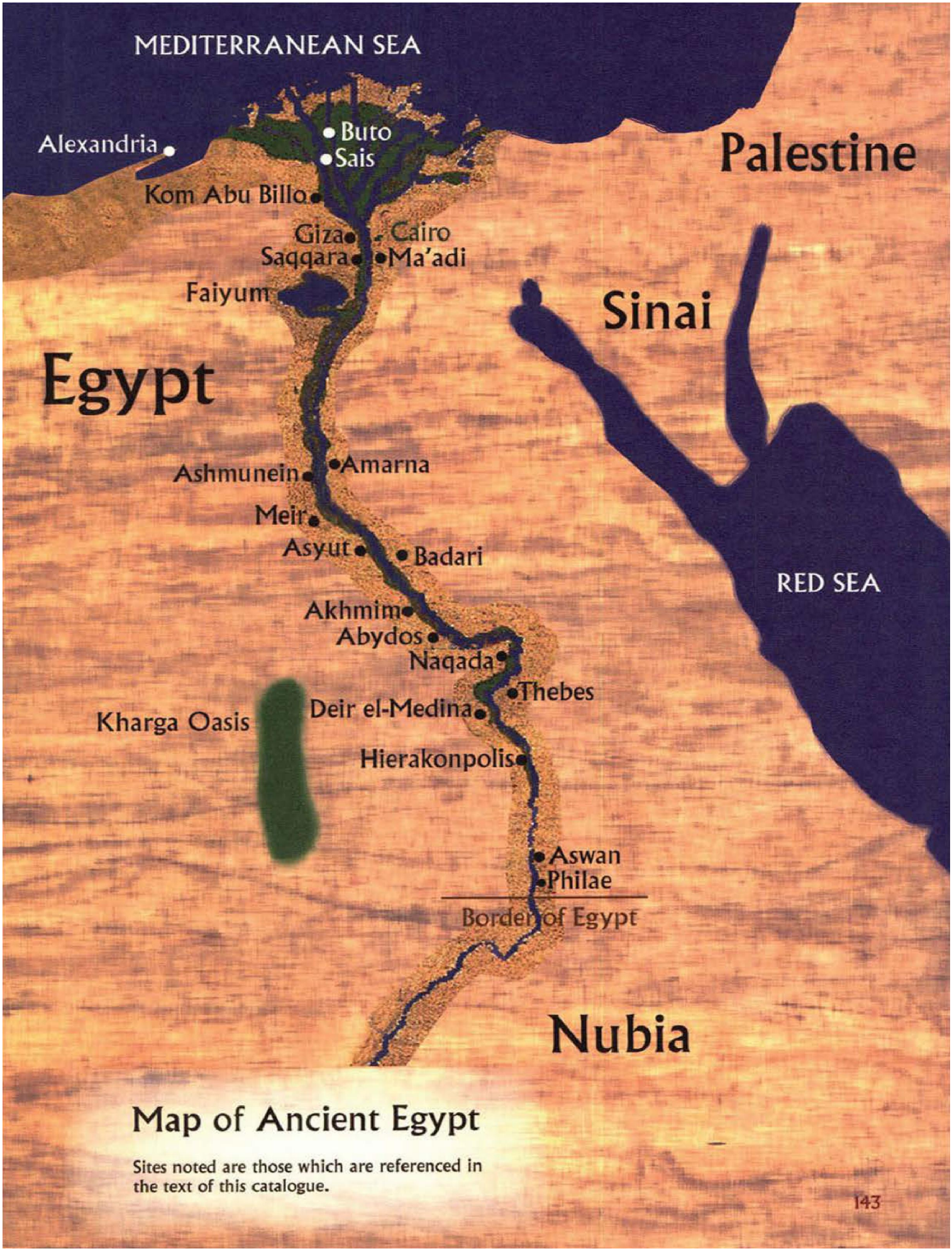
Tablet of Chalcedony
Even the pavement of a palace could be used for propaganda in the ancient world. This fragment of the palace of Assurnasirpal II from Susa was not entirely finished.
(RC 1801; 884-860 BC; chalcedony; 53x39 cm)



Marble Head
In the 4th century BC, Alexander the Great reached the banks of the Indus River. The artistic influence of invasion spread through the region. This item, though found in Mesopotamia, clearly shows Greek influence in its realism.
(RC 1621; c. AD 200; from Nineveh; 13x10 cm)







Map of Ancient Egypt

Sites noted are those which are referenced in the text of this catalogue.



CHRONOLOGY OF EGYPT

Predynastic Period
5000-3000 BC

Early Dynastic Period: Dynasties 0-2
3050-2663 BC

Old Kingdom: Dynasties 3-6
2663-2195 BC

First Intermediate Period: Dynasties 7-11a
2195-2066 BC

Middle Kingdom: Dynasties 11b-13
2066-1650 BC

Second Intermediate Period: Dynasties 15-17
1650-1549 BC

New Kingdom: Dynasties 18-20
1549-1069 BC

Third Intermediate Period: Dynasties 21-24
1064-717 BC

Cushite Period: Dynasty 25
752-656 BC

Saite Period: Dynasty 26
664-525 BC

Late Period: Dynasties 27-31
525-332 BC

Ptolemaic Period: Dynasties Macedon and Ptolemy
332-30 BC

Roman Period
30 BC-AD 395

Byzantine Period 395-640

Modern Islamic Period 640-1919

Egyptian Monarchy 1919-1953

Republic of Egypt 1953- present

SELECTED GODS AND GODDESSES OF EGYPT

Amun—the great state god of Thebes in Upper Egypt; shown as a man with a high feathered crown

Anubis—the protector of the cemetery and patron of the embalmers; represented as a man with the head of a jackal

Aten—god of the sun disk, worshiped by the ruler Akhenaten as a creator god

Bastet—cat-headed goddess of the city of Bubastis

Bes—dwarf god with lionlike features; protector of women and children

Hathor—a mother goddess and personification of fertility; depicted with cow horns or as a cow

Horus—originally a sky god; was regarded as the son of Osiris and Isis; defeated Seth in combat and claimed the right to succeed his father as king; portrayed as a child in his role as the son of Osiris

Imhotep—architect of King Djoser's step pyramid; later deified as patron of scholars and healers

Isis—wife of Osiris; depicted with a throne, the hieroglyph for her name, on her head; sometimes shown with a sun disk and the horns of the goddess Hathor for a crown

Khnum—ram-headed god of the area of the first cataract of the Nile

Khonsu—a moon god; usually depicted as a young man with the moon disk on his head

Mut—a mother goddess and consort of Amum at Thebes; shown as a woman with the double crown of Upper and Lower Egypt

Nefertum—a god of vegetation; depicted with a lotus on his head

Neith—goddess of the city of Sais; shown wearing the crown of Lower Egypt

Osiris—an ancient king, murdered by his brother Seth; became the principal god of the afterlife after his body was restored through the powers of his wife, Isis; represented as a man wrapped like a mummy with a tall crown bearing two feathers; his face is often green because he was also a god of vegetation

Ptah—creator god of Memphis; depicted wrapped as a mummy

Ptah-Sokar-Osiris—a complete deity consisting of three gods of creation, death, and the afterlife

Re—the sun and creator god; sometimes represented as a falcon-headed figure

Sekhmet—lion-headed goddess; protectress of Egypt and avenger for Re

Seth—murdered his brother Osiris and fought with Horus over the right to succeed the dead king; represented as a man with the head of an unidentified animal with a long snout

Sobek—chief diety of Faiyum; portrayed as a crocodile or man with a crocodile head

Taweret—popular household goddess associated with women in childbirth; represented as a hippopotamus

Thoth—ibis-headed god; inventor of writing; patron of intellectual pursuits

ENDNOTES

For full information on references cited, please see Bibliography on pages 149-150.
Also, LMS = Author commentary.

AFTERLIFE

[1] This ritual spell would be invoked as a part of the touching of multiple parts of the body with "magical" tools, in the belief that the touch and the spell would make the body function again, if only on a spiritual level. LMS

[2] Herodotus traveled the Mediterrannean world in the fifth century AD and is perhaps best known for his *Histories*, in which he discusses Egypt to some extent. Some scholars are suspicious of all of his data, perhaps believing that he merely spoke to Egyptians rather than seeing some events firsthand. LMS

[3] Tutankhamun's tomb was a sensation of its time, influencing even the fashion of the 1920s. Carter (with Mace) 1923-33, vol I-III.

[4] Death was not always seen by the Egyptians as a pleasant prospect. There are records of great fear of death, but also resignation. Called the "Harper's Songs," these sad poems generally advise one to enjoy life today, as who knew either when it would end or, truthfully, what the Afterlife was like, as "none ever returned." Lichtheim vol II 1976:116.

[5] See the Early Dynastic coffin, p. 83, of this volume.

[6] Ikram 1998:109.

[7] The standard beginning of the offering formula, called the *htp di nisw* formula, is "a gift given by the king" Variations follow, but from earliest times, the finery of the tombs was seen as either a direct gift of the king or largesse available by the king's gift of order. LMS

[8] Some examples of these *tableaus in situ* were excavated in the First Intermediate Period cemetery of Naga ed-Deir in the 1906 season. Field records of George A. Reisner, unpublished excavation photographs, Phoebe Apperson Hearst Museum of Anthropology Archives. LMS

[9] The head of Osiris was said to be buried at Abydos following his dismemberment by Seth, the god of Chaos. Every year, the mysteries of Osiris were re-enacted at Abydos, from his defeat of his enemies, to his resurrection by his wife Isis, through to fertility rituals. (I. Shaw and P. Nicholson 1995: 214)

[10] In the *Dispute of a Man and his Ba*, a prose offering of the Middle Kingdom, the tombs of the forgotten of generations past were described as possessing "offering stones (which) are desolate, as if they were the dead who died on the riverbank for lack of survivors." These comments tell us two things: it was bad to be forgotten and, perhaps worse, to have no heirs. Translation after Lichtheim vol I 1973:165.

[11] The *pr ankhw* were located so close to the temples as to be attached. An example is the one being excavated at Medinet Habu, which is located within four meters of the temple walls proper. LMS

[12] Ikram 1998:127-30.

[13] John Nunn (1996:50-51) describes the incident of Case 6 of P. Smith in which the shape and description of the brain is discussed, as well as Gloss A of Case 6. The brain is described in detail, and the problems that occur from a severe injury to it are dealt with.

[14] These *akhw* were seen as powerful and potentially dangerous spirits who could help or harm the living. See Parkinson 1991:142-44 for examples of letters written to the deceased in the hope of intercession.

[15] After Lichtheim vol I 1973-80:84.

[16] After Lichtheim vol II 1976-80:115-16.

[17] After Davies and Gardiner 1915:56.

DAILY LIFE

[1] This quote comes from Cairo Vase 1266+25218 (from Dynasty 20), which was once quite tall and inscribed with a collection of many love poems. It was found at the site of Deir el-Medina, though its many fragments are scattered throughout the world. The translation and infilling of the lacunae was accomplished by Miriam Lichtheim vol II 1976:193.

[2] P. British Museum 9994: a schoolbook written in the hand of a student. Dynasty 20. Translation after Lichtheim vol II 1976:169.

[3] The busts representing the anonymous ancestors were stored in shrines connected with the household, either in entryways or courtyards. Remains of these may be seen in Deir el-Medina, dating to the Ramesside Period. It was also financially advisable to care for the dead. Inheritance laws required proper burial and attention. See Janssen and Pestmann *JESHO* 11, no. 2 1968 137-170. Markoe, 1996:192.

[4] See note 5 of Afterlife for Letters to the Dead.

[5] Marriage: see Meskell 2002:95-102.

[6] Ancient colloquial term for marriage was "to bring a bundle," referring to the bridal gift. Meskell 2002:95.

[7] The tombs commissioned by women were somewhat different than those of men. The men included their wives in the tomb, but the women did not include their husbands. This is likely because the man would have been required, due to artistic convention, to be placed in the dominant position in the tomb. Therefore, some women appear in twice as many tombs as their husbands. (Keller 1999:42 "Afterlife" *Women of the Nile*.)

[8] Evidence suggests that at the age of fourteen, life expectancy was thirty-six years in the Dynastic Period, based on evidence from Gebelein and Asyut (Nunn 1996:22). See Meskell 2002:13 for further discussion. Child mortality rates would have driven this higher at younger ages, and the majority of progeny likely did not survive to adulthood.

[9] See Daily Life note 8.

[10] These were reserved for males, and a small number of those at that: "Only a tiny proportion of the population, perhaps as small as one percent, was literate." While Gay Robins asserts that ". . . there is no text that can be unequivocally shown to have been penned by a woman" (Robins 1993:13), women did claim the title of scribe, or *sst*, particularly in the Old Kingdom.

[11] In spite of the many literate residents of, for instance, Deir el-Medina, there is little evidence of the reasons for choosing marital partners. However, there is ample evidence for the reasons for divorce, ranging from adultery to incompatability. Meskell 2002: 95-6.

[12] Baines and Málek 1980:30.

[13] The seemingly eternal contest between farmer and "rancher" was no less intense in Egypt than in any other region of the world. The settled farmer often possessed suspicion of the nomadic herder, perhaps because of the perceived lack of social control inherent in nomadic life. LMS

[14] Though this was inscribed in Neferhoptep's tomb from the reign of Horemheb, the poem likely dates much earlier, and is purported to come form the tomb of Intef of the Middle Kingdom. Lichtheim vol II 1976:115.

RELIGION

[1] After Lichtheim vol II 1976:107.

[2] The Greek word for Egyptian writing, *hieroglyph*, literally means "sacred letters." LMS

[3] Robins 1993: 24: " . . . the goddess Hathor wears a pair of curved ostrich feathers." The earliest references to Hathor may well be 3500 BC, in ostrich feather burials with votive stones referring to the Golden One, a term for Hathor. Renee Friedman.

[4] Demotic continued on for a brief time, but the knowledge of reading the hieroglyphs was lost after this time. The spoken language was preserved in the Liturgy of the Coptic Church, however, and is still used to this day. LMS

[5] Robins 1993:18 "Hathor and the goddesses associated with her were perceived as having a dual nature." ". . . the essence of a divine being, whether manifested in male or female deities, could be dangerous to humans who approached it."

[6] Priests kept a percentage of the offerings as their earned wages. LMS

[7] Kemp 1989:91-105.

[8] Barbara Mendoza, MA, PhD. Cand. UC Berkeley, personal communication 2004.

[9] Ray, 1976.

[10] See the Stele of Ahmose Nefertari, p. 86, this volume. Made several centuries after her death, this stele honors her as a votive, much as a goddess would be honored.

[11] After Lichtheim vol I 1973:204.

[12] After Lichtheim vol II 1976:114.

GOVERNMENT

[1] Excerpt after Lichtheim vol II 1976:27.

[2] Ma'at was a goddess and a concept at the same time. Even during the reign of Akhenaten, when the gods were proscribed, the king was described as being one with ma'at. Ma'at was the perfection of the first moment of creation. Shaw and Nicholson 1995:166.

[3] This would be the *kenbet*, the local version of a court of the elders of a town. Vleeming, 1982:183-192.

[4] Records of these adversities give us the knowledge of such groups as "The Thirty," a high group of magistrates, perhaps akin to a Supreme Court. LMS

[5] *The Tale of the Eloquent Peasant*, a popular fictional story from the Middle Kingdom, involves a case brought to the Vizier. Lichtheim vol I 1976:169

[6] Deir el-Medina is the source of much of our knowledge of the workings of Egyptian society, although it may not be an entirely accurate reflection of average people. The denizens of Deir el-Medina were highly literate government employees.

[7] Some ritual actually included the presentation of an image of the goddess Ma'at to the gods, but all ritual perpetuated ma'at, that state of perfection at the moment of creation. Teeter, 1990.

[8] Ma'adi, currently a suburb of Cairo, is a good example of this: a typical Lower Egyptian town, with extensive contact with the Beersheba Valley, was suddenly depopulated, and the trade route occupied by another group of people with Upper Egyptian cultural traits several miles away at the site of Abu Minshat Omar. (Rizkana and Seeher, *MDAIK* 40 1984:237-52)

[9] These women held the title of Overseer of the Harim of Min, and were involved in the cult of Ahmose-Nefertari, probably as her descendants. LMS

[10] Ramses III was likely the victim of a harem conspiracy led by his wife Tiy in favor of her son. A. DeBuck "The judicial papyrus of Turin," *JEA* 23, 1937:152-64. This was considered acceptable to the perpetrators, though, as: "In the myth of the divine birth of the king, the god Amun-ra impregnates the king's mother and so fathers the king. Of course, no one would know this had happened until the king ascended the throne, when it followed he was the one fathered by the god." Robins 1993:38.

[11] This was the case with Pepi II, who came to the throne at about age ten, and for whom his mother, Ankhnesmerire, served as regent. This was the purpose of Hatshepsut as well, but she declared herself king with her charge, Thutmose III. Robins 1993:45-52.

[12] Shaw and Nicholson 1995:228-9.

[13] The first publication was *Amarna I*, in 1923.

[14] Reeves 1995:16-33.

[15] Deir el-Medina was the location of this contention. LMS

[16] Robins 1993:149-156.

[17] See Bowman, 1996.

[18] Lichtheim vol II 1976:93.

EGYPT AFTER THE PHARAOHS

[1] I.H.C. Williams, from Walker and Higgs 2001:192.

[2] Many of the fossilizations of Coptic worship from the ancient Egyptian temple activities was probably because of this early adoption of Christianity. Less material was lost through cultural change to the Greco-Roman world than might have been. LMS

[3] These monks were not always peaceful. In AD 412-44, Saint Cyril led an army of militant monks against the pagans. Carroll 1988:79.

[4] Hk3-Pth, a local name for the capital of Egypt, Memphis, was pronounced by the Greeks as *Aegy-ptus*, which later transformed into "Copt." LMS

[5] Carroll 1988:78.

[6] In the context of Egyptian culture, it is interesting to note that Saint Catherine of Alexandria was renowned for her education and intelligence, using her wits to convert many pagans before her demise. LMS

[7] Visiting the temples is an experience in archaeological stratigraphy. Although the temples have been cleared of their matrix, one may ascertain the depth of the soil during various periods, based on the height at which the artwork, graffiti, and fire marks appear on the walls and columns. LMS

[8] See the image of Tutu, p. 125, this volume.

[9] The Hanging Church of Cairo, located in Coptic Cairo. This was said to be the location of both the drawing of Moses from the Nile, and the resting place of the Holy Family awaiting Herod's demise. LMS

[10] When asked about this, the boatmen simply say it is to protect against evil and danger. While none of the old gods are invoked, the custom is very ancient. LMS

[11] The ka priests recited the funerary formulae to the spirits of the dead as a part of their work. LMS

[12] This practice harkens back to the ancient Egyptian belief in the power of the written word. Writing was magical and could be protective. The passages of the Koran incised on these amulets are meant to act as protection. LMS

OTHER CULTURES

[1] After Moran 1992:104 Amarna Letter *EA* 35.

[2] The trade of the Egyptians was often perceived by the Egyptians to be tribute, and therefore not balanced reciprocation. Throughout the Amarna Letters, however, the vassal kings appear to expect more parity in the relationship. Moran 1992.

[3] Some possible examples of this material have been found at Buto in Lower Egypt, somewhat confusing our understanding of contact points. LMS

[4] Mesopotamian materials appear in Egypt, yet little identifiable material from Egypt has been found in the reverse. In all likelihood, Egypt was exporting raw materials for use in Mesopotamian workshops, and receiving worked goods in return. Gold, perfumes, or grain would be difficult to identify in the archaeological record, though Jamdet Nasr seals from Mesopotamia, for example, are very distinctive. LMS

[5] One of the aspects of this was diplomatic marriage. "In addition to marrying women of Egyptian origins, some kings of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties also married foreign princesses in order to cement diplomatic alliances." Robins 1993:30.

[6] The Surveys of the Western Oases, led by Dr. Salima Ikram, have proven pivotal in this newfound knowledge of the extensive use of these regions.

[7] The date of the earliest writing is continuously being pushed back based on these early sites. Currently, the date of the very first writing is 3500 BC, and occurs on the routes for trade through the oases of Egypt. LMS

[8] The traditional enemies of Egypt were called the "Nine Bows." The national enemies were always numbered as nine, even when some of the traditional members of this unhappy cadre were allies of the Egyptians. LMS

[9] The sense of cultural superiority was strong, however, and superseded Egyptian diplomatic relations: "from old, the daughter of an Egyptian King has not been given in marriage to anyone." Amenhotep to a foreign king. Schulman, *JNES* 38:177-193.

[10] The Amarna Letters offers excellent examples of the number of vassal states in the Levant. The site of Beth Shean in the West Bank has proven quite important as an Egyptian administrative outpost. LMS

[11] Moran 1992 Amarna Letter *EA* 162.

[12] Translation by Maureen Gallery Kovacs, electronic edition by Wolf Carnahan 1998, of the Academy for Ancient Texts.

[13] For more information on this poet see Anderson, 1994:220-4.

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Abbreviation Key:

JEA: Journal of Egyptian Archaeology

JNES: Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Chicago)

MDAIK: Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäelogischen Instituts, Abteilung Kairo DAIK (Mainz/Cairo/Berlin/Wiesbaden)

JESHO: Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient (Leiden)

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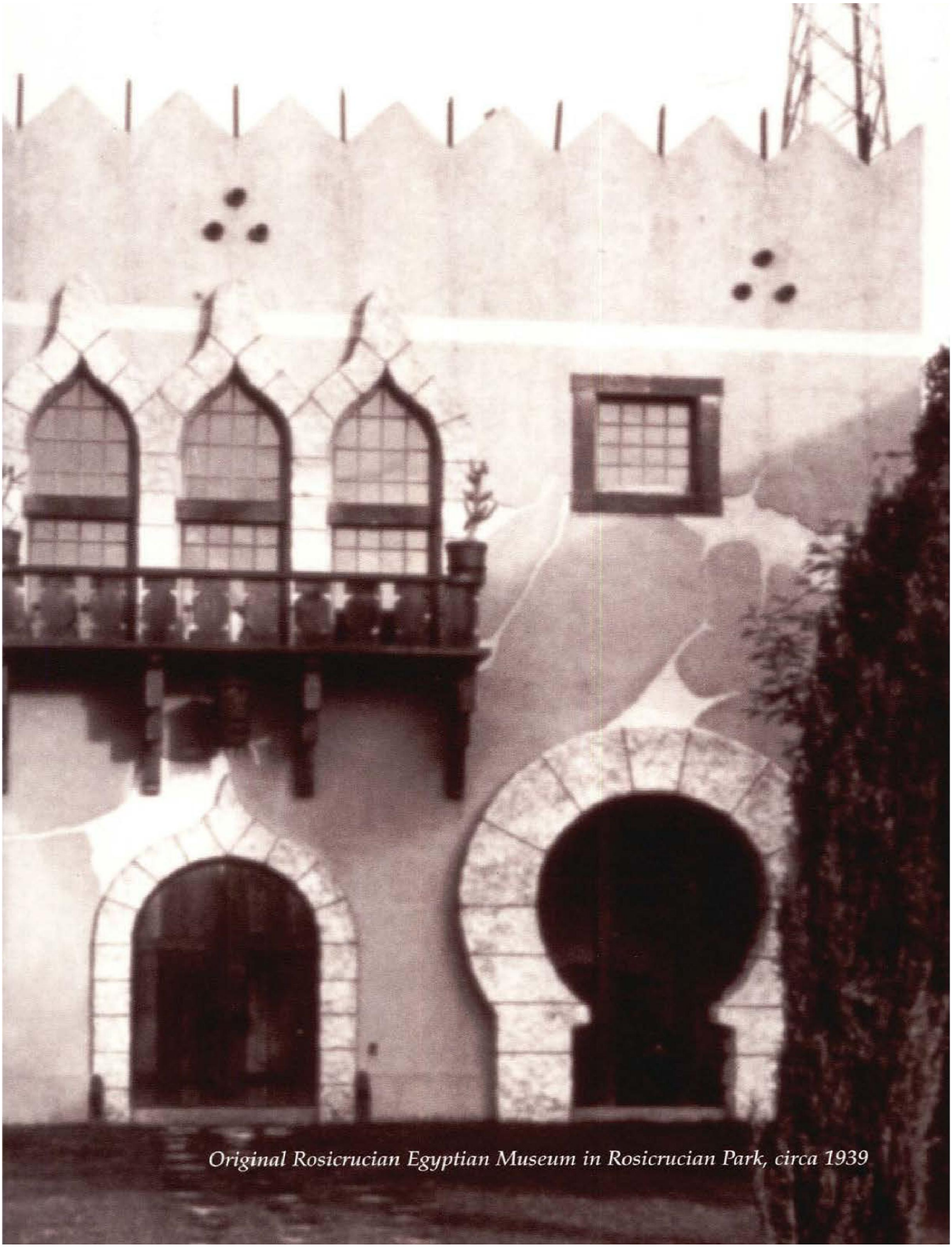
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Original Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum in Rosicrucian Park, circa 1939